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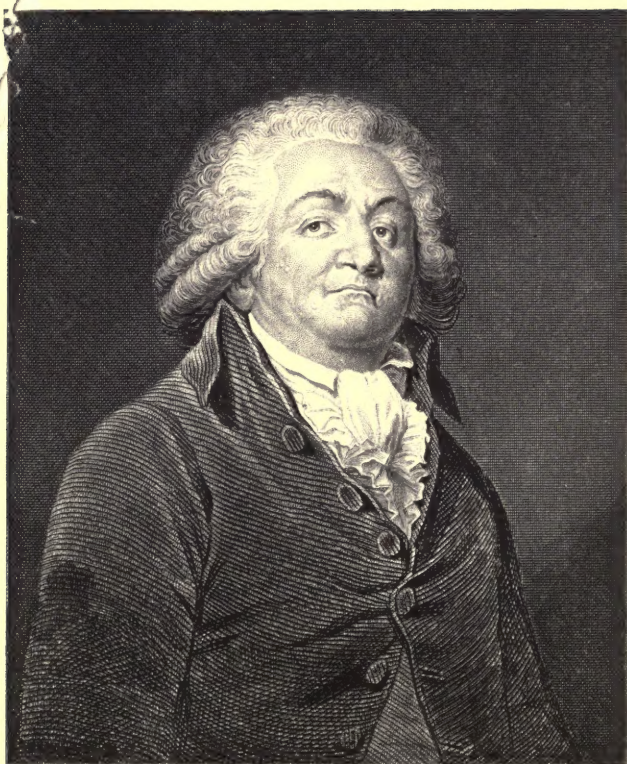


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HISTORY OF EUROPE

“BELLUM maxime omnium memorabile, quæ unquam gesta sint, me scripturum ; quod, Hannibale duce, Carthaginienses cum populo Romano gessere. Nam neque validiores opibus ullæ inter se civitates gentesque contulerunt arma, neque his ipsis tantum unquam virium aut roboris fuit : et haud ignotas belli artes inter se, sed expertas primo Punico conserebant bello : odiis etiam prope majoribus certarunt quam viribus : et adeo varia belli fortuna ancepsque Mars fuit, ut propius periculum fuerint qui vicerunt.”—LIVY, lib. xxi.



HISTORY OF EUROPE

FROM

THE COMMENCEMENT OF

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

TO THE

RESTORATION OF THE BOURBONS

IN MDCCCXV

BY

SIR ARCHIBALD ALISON, BART., D.C.L.

Tenth Edition, with Portraits

VOL. II.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

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HISTORY OF EUROPE.

CHAPTER VI.

FORMATION OF A DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION.—FROM THE
REVOLT AT VERSAILLES TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE CON-
STITUENT ASSEMBLY.—OCT. 7, 1789—SEPT. 14, 1791.

“In every country,” says Sallust, “those who have no property envy the good, extol the bad, deride antiquity, support innovation, desire change from the alarming state of their own affairs, live in mobs and tumults, since poverty has nothing to fear from such convulsions. But many causes made the city populace pre-eminent in these respects ; for whoever in the provinces were most remarkable for their depravity or self-sufficiency—all who had lost their patrimony, or their place in society—all whom wickedness or disgrace had driven from their homes, found their way to Rome as the common sewer of the Republic.”* The French Assembly experienced the truth of these

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1.
Ruinous
effects of
the removal
of the As-
sembly to
Paris.

* “Semper in civitate,” says the historian, “quibus opes nullæ sunt, bonis invident, malos extollunt ; vetera odere, nova exoptant, odio suarum rerum mutari omnia student ; turba atque seditionibus sine cura aluntur ; quoniam egestas facile habetur sine damno. Sed urbana plebes, ea vero, præceps ierat multis de causis ; nam qui ubique probro atque petulantia maxime præstabant, item alii per dedecora patrimoniis amissis, postremo omnes quos flagitium aut facinus domo expulerat, hi Romam sicuti in sentinam confluxerant.”—SALLUST, *Bell. Cat.* § 37.

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1789.

principles in a remarkable manner upon the removal of the seat of its deliberations to the metropolis. To the natural depravity of a great city, its population added the extraordinary corruption arising from the profligacy and irreligion of preceding reigns. To these were now added the unbounded license and vehement desires which had grown up with the enthusiasm of the time, and the sudden acquisition of supreme power by the multitude. Never were objects of such magnitude offered to the passions of a people so little accustomed to coerce their passions ; never was flattery so intoxicating poured into the minds of men so little able to withstand it. The National Assembly, with a fatal precipitance, placed itself without any protection at the mercy of the most corrupt populace in Europe, at the period of its highest excitation. It did not require the gift of prophecy to foretell what would be the result of such a prostration.

2.
Duke of Or-
leans sent
to England,
Oct. 14.

The removal of the court to Paris produced immediate changes of importance in the contending parties. The Duke of Orleans was the first to decline in influence. General Lafayette exerted himself with vigour and success to show that he had been the secret author of the disturbances which had so nearly proved fatal to the royal family, and declared publicly that he possessed undoubted proofs of his accession to the tumult, with the design of making himself lieutenant-general of the kingdom. That abandoned prince had now lost the confidence of all parties. The court was aware of his treason ; the people saw his weakness ; his own associates were in despair at his pusillanimity. No one can long remain at the head of a band of conspirators who wants courage to reap, for the common behoof, the fruits of their crimes. “The coward !” said Mirabeau, “he has the appetite for crime, but not the courage to execute it.” Even at the Palais Royal his influence was lost, except with his hireling supporters ; and the King, glad to get quit of so dangerous a subject, with the entire concurrence of the National Assembly,¹ and

¹ Toul. i.
152. Lac.
vii. 259. Th.
i. 184, 185,
186.

without opposition even from his hireling supporters, sent him into honourable exile on a mission to the court of London.

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1789.

From this departure nothing but good was to be expected; but the secession of other members diminished the influence of reason in the Assembly, and left a fatal ascendancy to revolutionary ambition. Mounier and Lally Tollendal, despairing of the cause of order, retired from the capital; and the former established himself in Dauphiny, his native province, where he endeavoured to organise an opposition to the Assembly.* The departure of these well-meaning, though deluded patriots, who had taken so decided a part in the first usurpation of the Tiers Etat, was a serious calamity to France: it weakened the friends of rational freedom, and, by extending the fatal example of defection, left the country a prey to the ambitious men who were striving to raise themselves by means of the public calamities. They had expected that the people, after having delivered the Assembly on the 14th July, would immediately submit themselves to its authority; they were the first to find that popular commotions are more easily excited than regulated, and that the multitude will not shake off one authority merely to subject themselves to another. Those who were the heroes of the nation on the occasion of the Tennis-court oath and the union of the orders had already fallen into neglect; the parliaments had been passed by them in the career of democracy, and they were already outstripped by their more ambitious inferiors.¹

3.
Retirement
of Mounier
and Lally
Tollendal.

¹ Lac. vii.
255. Mig.
i. 97. Th.
i. 191.

* The latter thus justified himself to one of his friends for retiring from public life:—"My health renders my continuance in the Assembly impossible; but laying that aside, I could no longer endure the horror occasioned by that blood, those heads, that queen half-murdered, that king led a captive in the midst of assassins, and preceded by the heads of the unhappy guards who had died in his service; those murderers, those female cannibals, that infernal cry, 'A la lanterne tous les évêques;' Mirabeau exclaiming that the vessel of the Revolution, far from being arrested in its course, would now advance with more rapidity than ever: these are the circumstances which have induced me to fly from that den of cannibals, where my voice can no longer be heard, and where for six weeks I have striven in vain to raise it."—LACRETELLE, vii. 265, 266.

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4.

Tumult in
Paris, and
murder of
François.
Oct. 19.

The national guard of Paris, under the command of the deluded Lafayette, who still fondly clung to the illusion that order could be preserved under democratic rule, for some days succeeded in re-establishing tranquillity in the capital. Ere long, however, the former scenes of violence recurred. A baker named François was murdered in the streets, on the 19th October, by a mob who were enraged at finding that the return of the King had not immediately had the effect of lowering the price of provisions. With the savage temper of the times, they put his head on a pike, and paraded it through the streets, compelling every baker whom they met to kiss the remains. The wife of François, far advanced in pregnancy, who was running in a state of distraction towards the Hôtel de Ville, met the crowd; at the sight of the bloody head she fainted on the pavement. The mob had the barbarity to lower it into her arms, and press the lifeless lips against her face. The magistrates and National Assembly did nothing to prevent or punish this barbarity: elected by universal suffrage, they were paralysed at every step by the dread of losing their popularity. Such unparalleled atrocity, however, excited the indignation of all the better class of citizens, and by their influence martial law was proclaimed, and Lafayette, putting himself at the head of the national guard, attacked the mob, and seized the ruffian who carried the head, who was executed next day. The indignant populace murmured at this severity. "What!" they exclaimed, "is this our liberty? We can no longer hang whom we please!" But this first and almost single punishment of popular crime which took place during the Revolution had a surprising effect for a short time in restoring order, and clearly demonstrated with how much ease all the atrocities of the Revolution might have been checked by proper firmness, first in the King, and after this period in the Assembly, if they had been seconded by the faithful obedience of the troops.^{1*}

¹ Toul. i.
168. Mig.
i. 98. Th.
i. 192. Lac.
vii. 226.
Parl. Hist.
iii. 190.
Prudhom.
Crimes de
la Rév. iii.
169, 170.

* " L'Assemblée Constituante devait du moins s'empresse de punir avec

The Assembly, acting under the impulse of the indignation which this murder excited, entertained a motion for a decree against seditious assemblages, known by the name of the decree of *Martial Law*. It was proposed, that on occasion of any serious public disturbance, the municipality should hoist the red flag, and immediately every group of citizens were to be bound to disperse, on pain of military execution. Mirabeau, Buzot, and Robespierre vehemently opposed the measure: they felt the importance of such popular movements to aid their sanguinary designs. "If we do not awaken from our stupor," said the last named, "it is all over with public freedom. The deputies of the municipality demand bread and soldiers. Why? to repress the people at a moment when passions and intrigues of all sorts are conspiring to render the Revolution abortive. Those who excite them are well aware, that popular tumults are the most effectual means of repressing the multitude and extinguishing freedom. When the people are dying of famine they will always collect in mobs; to remove these disturbances you must ascend to their cause, and discover their authors, who would ruin us all. There can be no mistake so great as to suppose that the duty of repressing those delinquencies should be committed to others; the National Assembly alone is entitled to take cognisance of crimes committed against the nation. We should organise *a tribunal in this Assembly, to take a final and definite cognisance of all state offences*; we should trust nothing to the Procureur du Roi at the Châtelet. If we do not do this, the constitution, amidst all our deliberations, will be stifled in its cradle." Already Robespierre had the Revolutionary Tribunal in view. But the recollection of the 6th October, the excesses of the peasantry in the provinces, and the murder of François, was too recent; and the law authorising the magistrates to hoist the red flag, and proclaim martial law to disperse seditious assemblies, was passed by a large majority.¹

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5.
Decree
against
seditious
mobs.
Oct. 21.

éclat, mais chacun voulait se populariser, et ce motif seul a fait presque tous les crimes qui souillèrent la Révolution."—PRUDHOMME, iii. 168.

Hist. Parl.
iii. 201, 207.
Deux Amis,
iii. 316, 322.

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6.

Fresh
tumults.
Oct. 23.

But notwithstanding this enactment, the people, who never thought it could be carried into execution, would not relinquish without a struggle the agreeable office of public executioners. Two robbers were seized by them, under pretence that the tribunals were too slow in executing justice, and hung upon the spot; a third was on the point of being strangled, when Lafayette arrived with his grenadiers, and inflicted a summary chastisement on those self-constituted authorities. Shortly after, he suppressed, with equal vigour and courage, a dangerous revolt of the armed guard of Paris, which was already beginning to form a nucleus to the disaffected. Yet, even at the time that he was daily exposing his life in his efforts to restore the force of the laws, he was proclaiming, from the tribunal of the National Assembly, the dangerous doctrine, that "when the people are oppressed, *insurrection becomes the most sacred of duties*." How often do expressions, incautiously used, produce consequences which life bravely exposed is unable to prevent! With profound wisdom Homer styled words "winged:"* deeds are limited to a spot; expressions make the circuit of the globe.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, iii.
324, 326.
Lac. vii.
263, 267,
269. Th.
i. 192.
Buzot, 174.

7.

Virtual
captivity
of the royal
family, and
insults to
which they
are exposed.

The King, Queen, and whole royal family, were no sooner settled at the Tuileries than they received convincing proof, not only that they were state prisoners, but that they were liable to the most humiliating insults from the lowest of the populace. On the morning after their arrival, the same impassioned viragoes who had bestridden the cannon in the frightful procession of the preceding day, assembled under the Queen's windows, and insisted that she should show herself. No sooner did she appear than they overwhelmed her with reproaches, to which she answered with such gentleness and dignity that an involuntary burst of applause was elicited from the multitude. Aware, however, to what a degree she was the object of jealousy to the popular leaders, a committee of the constitutionalists, or middle party in the

* "ἑπεα πτερόεντα."

Assembly, suggested to the Queen, by means of the Duchess de Luynes, that, till the constitution at least was formed, she should retire from France. But Marie Antoinette immediately answered—"I am well aware of your motives, but I will never separate myself from my husband ; if necessary, I would willingly sacrifice my life in his behalf ; but the throne is what they seek to destroy, and therefore my departure, when he remained, would be an act of cowardice on my part without benefiting him."

The royal family were watched by the national guard and Gardes Françaises, who were entirely in the interest of the Revolutionists, and night and day they were so closely observed, and such a crowd surrounded the Tuileries, that they never attempted to go out, and all thoughts of escape were out of the question. On one subsequent occasion, when the King endeavoured to go to St Cloud to hunt, the populace assembled at the gates of the gardens of the Tuileries, and cut the traces of the carriage, without Lafayette, who was present, either venturing or being able to interfere. So gross were the insults to which the Queen was exposed, when she went to the windows to take the air, that she soon ceased to do so, and occupied herself entirely with the education of her children, to which she paid the most unremitting attention ; or, like Queen Mary at Lochleven, in large pieces of needle-work, one of which long adorned an apartment in the palace.¹

The dauphin, who was now of an age to receive impressions of external things, and who was of a serene, contemplative character, was profoundly afflicted by the sudden change which the royal family experienced on their removal to Paris. The ancient dilapidated furniture of the rooms, which had not been inhabited for a very long period ; the absence of all their wonted comforts ; above all, the disappearance of the body guard, and the substitution of entirely new faces in the service of the palace, filled him with astonishment. He repeatedly asked its cause. "My son," said the Queen, "the

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¹ Campan,
ii. 87, 93.
Montjoye,
Vie de Marie
Antoinette,
i. 241.
Weber, ii.
1, 7.

8.
Anecdotes
of the Dau-
phin, and
serenity of
the Queen.

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King has now no other guards but the hearts of the French!" Louis one day took him on his knee, and explained to his infant mind the history of the Revolution in terms so clear, and yet just, that no account of equal value, in a similar space, has yet been given.* On another occasion, one of the ladies of the court having observed that some one was as happy as a queen; the dauphin said, "Surely it is not mamma that you mean when you speak thus." "Why," said Madame de Neuville, "is the mamma of your Royal Highness not happy?" Looking then carefully around him, to see that he was not overheard, he said, "No, she is not happy, she weeps all the night." This first explained to the ladies in the palace the cause of the red and inflamed eyes of the Queen; for such was her strength of mind that she was never seen during the day but with a serene countenance, and generally a smile on her lips.¹

¹ Weber,
ii. 7, 8.
Campan,
ii. 89, 90.

9.
Meeting of
the Assem-
bly and of
the Jacobin
club in their
new halls.

The Assembly, after its translation to Paris, at first held its sittings in one of the halls of the Archbishop's palace. The first meeting there took place on the 19th October, the Assembly having been adjourned in the intervening period. Imposing ceremonies attended its installation in its new place of meeting: deputations from the municipality of Paris, headed by Bailly, and from the national guard, by Lafayette, presented themselves to congratulate the Assembly on its arrival in the capital; and the deputies, in a body, waited on the King to renew their protestations of fidelity. The

* Louis le prit sur ses genoux, et lui dit, à peu de mots près, ce qui suit : — "Mon enfant, j'ai voulu rendre le peuple encore plus heureux qu'il ne l'étoit; j'ai eu besoin d'argent pour payer les dépenses occasionnées par les guerres. J'en ai demandé à mon peuple, comme l'ont toujours fait mes prédécesseurs : des magistrats qui composent le parlement s'y sont opposés, et ont dit que mon peuple avait seul le droit d'y consentir. J'ai assemblé à Versailles les premiers de chaque ville par leur naissance, leur fortune, ou leurs talens; voilà ce qu'on appelle les Etats-Généraux. Quand ils ont été assemblés, ils m'ont demandé des choses que je ne puis faire, ni pour moi, ni pour vous, qui serez mon successeur; il s'est trouvé des méchans qui ont fait soulever le peuple; et les excès où il s'est porté les jours derniers, sont leur ouvrage; il ne faut pas en vouloir au peuple." — MADAME CAMPAN, ii. 89, 90.

Queen, with the Dauphin in her arms, went through their ranks : many tears were shed at the touching spectacle. But an ominous event occurred on the same day. The club Breton, which, as already noticed, contained all the extreme revolutionary characters,* hitherto however confined to members of the States-general, followed the Assembly from Versailles, and established its sittings in the library of the convent of the JACOBINS, in the Rue St Honoré, which thenceforward gave its name, since become imperishable, to the club. From this time admission was given to all persons who were recommended by two members of the society as fit to belong to it. Their sittings were so far secret, that no one could be admitted but by tickets of admission ; but they were freely given to all persons of known republican principles, especially if distinguished by their talents for writing or public speaking.¹

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¹ Moniteur, Oct. 15 and 19, 1789, p. 308. Hist. Parl. iii. 188, 189. Deux Amis, iii. 304, 305.

The Baron de Besenval, in whose favour M. Necker had so generously interfered on his return to Paris, was shortly after tried before the High Court of Châtelet, and acquitted. In preparing for his defence, his counsel had urged him to make use of a document signed by the hand of the King, which authorised him to repel force by force. "God forbid," said he, "that I should purchase life by endangering so excellent a monarch !" and tore the writing in pieces. The Marquis de Favras was some time after brought before the same tribunal, and the indignation of the people at the former acquittal was such, that from the beginning of the trial his fate was apparent. The crime laid to his charge was of the most absurd and incredible description—that of having entered into a conspiracy to overturn the constitution—and it was unsupported by any adequate evidence. But he was condemned by a tribunal which was intimidated by a ferocious multitude, who never ceased exclaiming, even in the hall of justice, "A la lanterne ! A la

10.
Trial and execution of the Marquis de Favras.

* Ante, chap. iv. § 38.

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lanterne!" On the day of his execution he was conducted at three in the morning, clothed in a white shirt, to the Place de Grève, where, with a torch in his hand, he read with a firm voice his sentence of death, and died with heroic firmness, protesting his innocence to the last—the first victim of JUDICIAL INIQUITY which the Revolution had produced. He admitted having received a hundred louis from a nobleman of high rank,* but refused to divulge his name, and uniformly declared that he was no further implicated in any conspiracy. So evident was the injustice practised in this trial that it attracted the notice, and excited the fear, even of the supporters of the Revolution, by whom it was justly regarded as of sinister augury thus to sacrifice an innocent man to a supposed state necessity.† The people assembled in vast crowds, and with savage joy, to witness his punishment, though it was conducted at midnight by torchlight. The unusual spectacle of a marquis being *hanged*, a punishment unknown for persons of that rank heretofore, was a visible proof of the equality in condition which the Revolution had occasioned; and, after it was over, brutal jests and innumerable parodies on the mode of his execution were heard in every street.¹

¹ *Moniteur*, Feb. 20, 1789. Prud. Crimes de la Rév. iii. 187, 188. Th. i. 210, 211. Lac. vii. 271, 275.

11.
Division of France into departments and municipal establishments. Jan. 9, 1790.

The first great legislative measure of the Assembly was directed against the rising jealousies of the provinces. These little states, proud of their ancient privileges, had beheld with profound regret the extinction of their rights and importance in the increasing sovereignty of the National Assembly, and were in some places taking measures to counteract its influence. To put a stop to their

* He was afterwards understood to have been Monsieur the Comte d'Artois. See MICHELLE, *Histoire de la Révolution*, i. 64.

† "Votre vie est un sacrifice nécessaire à la tranquillité publique," furent les expressions sorties de la bouche du rapporteur Quatremère, et adressés au Marquis. Le supplice du Marquis de Evras fut regardé comme le plus sinistre augure pour une révolution naissante, et ce pressentiment fut trop vérifié dans le temps. Les bons citoyens frémissent de voir la cour et l'Assemblée Constituante laisser naître *un crime juridique*, et le crime justifier par les circonstances."—PRUDHOMME, iii. 156; and *Révolutions de Paris*, No. 32. pp. 31, 32.

designs, the kingdom was distributed into new divisions, called departments, which were nearly equal in extent and population. Eighty-four of these comprehended the whole kingdom of France ; each department was divided into districts, and each district into cantons, which last usually embraced five or six parishes. A criminal tribunal was established for each department, a civil court for each district, a court of reference for each canton. Every department had a council of administration, consisting of thirty-six members, and an executive council, composed of five. The district had its council and directory organised in the same manner. The purpose of the canton was electoral—not executive ; the citizens united there to elect their deputies and magistrates ; the qualification for voting was a contribution to the amount of three days' labour. The deputies elected by the cantons were intrusted with the nomination of the representatives in the National Assembly, the administrators of the department, those of the district, and the judges in the courts of law. To secure still further the control of the people, the judges were appointed only for three years ; after which their appointment required to be renewed by the electors—a pernicious state of dependence, even more dangerous when upon a sovereign multitude than an arbitrary prince, inasmuch as the latter is permanent, and may find his interest or that of his family injured by deeds of injustice, whereas the former is perpetually fluctuating, and influenced neither by a feeling of responsibility, nor by any durable interest in the consequences of iniquity.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl. iii. 260, 278, 430, 439. Mig. i. 98, 99. Toul. i. 172. Th. i. 196. Madame de Staël, Rév. Franç. i. 375.

This decree arranged the rights and limits of the rural districts ; another settled the powers and privileges of the inhabitants of towns. The administration of cities was intrusted to a general council, and a municipality whose number was proportioned to the population they contained. The municipal officers, or magistrates, were named directly by the people, and were alone authorised

¹². Municipal regulations, and elective franchise.

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to require the assistance of the armed force ; and as they were appointed by universal suffrage, the whole civil authority of the kingdom was thenceforward at the command of the people. There were neither officers nor judges appointed by the crown, nor any resident noblesse or proprietors to oppose their mandates. Domiciliary visits, searches, imprisonments, informations of suspected hostility to the Revolution—all were at the command of these executive committees of the majority. Whoever resisted or counteracted them, found himself engaged alone in a contest with the whole civil and military power of the State, based upon the concurrence of an overwhelming superiority of members.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
iii. 328, 335,
415, 417.
Deux Amis,
iii. 329, 352.
Mig. i. 99,
100. Th.
i. 196.

13.
Vast effects
of these
changes.

The execution of these decrees was the most important step in the history of the Revolution : they were a practical application of the principle recognised in the “Rights of Man,” that all sovereignty flows from the people. By this gigantic step, the whole civil force of the kingdom was placed at the disposal of the lower orders. By the nomination of the municipality, they had the government of the towns ; by the command of the armed force, the control of the military ; by the elections in the departments, the appointment of the deputies to the Assembly, the judges to the courts of law, the bishops to the church, the officers to the national guard ; by the elections in the cantons, the choice of magistrates and local representatives. Every thing thus, either directly or by the intervention of a double election, flowed from the people ; and the qualification for voting was so low as practically to admit every able-bodied man. Forty-eight thousand communes, or municipalities, were thus erected in France, and exercised, concurrently and incessantly, the rights of sovereignty ; hardly any appointment was left at the disposal of the crown. After so complete a democratic constitution, it is not surprising that, during all the subsequent changes of the Revolution,² the popular party should have

² Mig. i.
100. Th.
i. 97, 196.
Lac. vii. 339.
Deux Amis,
iii. 336, 350.

acquired such irresistible power; and that, in almost every part of France, the persons in authority should be found supporting the multitude, upon whom they depended for their continuance in it.

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This great change however, was not brought about without causing the most violent local discontents. It shocked too many feelings, and subverted too many established interests, not to produce a general excitement. Divisions as ancient as the time of the fall of the Roman empire; parliaments coeval with the first dawn of freedom; prejudices nursed for centuries; barriers of nature incapable of removal; political aversions still in their vigour—were all disregarded in this great act of democratic despotism. Remonstrances accordingly were sent in on all sides, and in many districts serious disturbances arose, especially in Brittany and Languedoc. But the protests of the provinces, the resistance of the local parliaments, the clamour of the states, could neither deter nor arrest the National Assembly. A change greater than the Romans attempted in the zenith of their power, and such as the vigour of Peter, the ambition of Alexander, never dared to contemplate, was successfully achieved by a popular assembly, a few months after its first establishment,—a memorable proof of the force of public opinion, and the irresistible power of that new spring which general information and the influence of the press had now, for the first time, brought to bear on public affairs. In parcelling out France into these arithmetical divisions, the Constituent Assembly treated it precisely as if it were a conquered country. Its patriots realised for its free inhabitants, what the Roman historian laments as the last drop of bitterness in the cup of the vanquished.¹ * Acting as conquerors,

14.
General excitement in the provinces.

¹ Deux Amis, iii. 340, 352. Mig. i. 100. Lac. vii. 336, 337.

* “Non ut olim universæ legiones deducebantur, cum tribunis et centurionibus, et sui cujusque ordinis militibus, ut consensu et caritate Rempublicam afficerent: sed ignoti inter se diversis manipulis, sine rectore, sine affectibus mutuis, quasi ex alio genere mortalium repente in unum collecti, numerus magis, quam colonia.”—TACITUS, *Annal.* xiv. c. 27.

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they imitated the policy of the harshest of that cruel race.*

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15.
Lowering of
the elective
franchise.

At the same time, the right to the elective franchise for the primary assemblies was fixed at twenty-five years of age, and the contribution of a *marc* of money, or the value of three days' labour. By the law, the qualification to be eligible for the electoral assemblies was somewhat higher—it was a contribution of ten days' labour : for the National Assembly it was fixed at an imposition of a marc of silver, and the possession of some property. In practice, however, the latter condition soon came to be disregarded, the choice of the people being held to supersede every other qualification. The election of members of the legislature took place by two degrees : the electors in the first instance, in their primary assemblies, choosing the delegates who were to appoint the legislators, and they in their turn selecting the deputies for the Assembly. It was calculated that this system of suffrage introduced 4,290,000 electors to the rights of citizens in France. Universal suffrage would have given six millions, the same number who were capable of bearing arms in the kingdom. The world had never yet seen so prodigious a multitude of men invested with the practical administration of affairs. It is not surprising that its effects were unprecedented in human annals :¹ so un-

¹ Deux
Amis, iii.
352, 354.
Hist. Parl.
iii. 430, 432.
Th. i. 197.
Mich. Hist.
de la Rév.
i. 159.

* "The policy of such barbarous victors," says Mr Burke, "who condemn a subdued people, and insult their inhabitants, ever has been to destroy all vestiges of the ancient country in religion, policy, laws, and manners ; to confound all territorial limits, produce a general poverty, crush their nobles, princes, and pontiffs ; to lay low everything which lifted its head above the level, or which could serve to combine or rally, in their distresses, the disbanded people under the standard of old opinion. They have made France free in the manner in which their ancient friends to the rights of mankind freed Greece, Macedon, Gaul, and other nations. If their present project of a Republic should fail, all securities for a moderate freedom fail along with it : they have levelled and crushed together all the orders which they found under the monarchy : all the indirect restraints which mitigate despotism are removed, insomuch that, if monarchy should ever again obtain an entire ascendancy in France, under *this or any other dynasty*, it will probably be, if not voluntarily tempered at setting out by the wise and virtuous counsels of the prince, the most completely arbitrary power that ever appeared on earth."—BURKE'S *Consid.*, Works, v. 328, 333.

bounded were the visions which the acquisition of those novel powers spread among the people, that the marriages in France increased a fifth in 1790—a change which, followed as it immediately was by general and acute distress from the universal feeling of insecurity which prevailed, ultimately tended in a fearful degree to increase the violence of the Revolution.*

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These two measures, the division of the kingdom into departments, and the prodigious degradation of the elective franchise, rapidly proved fatal to freedom in France. The latter brought up a body of representatives in the next Assembly which overturned the throne, and induced the Reign of Terror and the despotism of Napoleon ; the former, by destroying the influence of the provinces, and concentrating the whole authority of the state in Paris, had left no power existing capable of withstanding the weight, whether in popular, monarchical, or military hands, of the capital. It was not thus in old France. For sixteen years Paris was occupied by the English, and an English monarch was crowned at Rheims ; but the provinces resisted and saved the monarchy. The League long held the capital ; but Henry IV., at the head of the forces of the provinces, reduced it to submission. But since the separation into departments, the extinction of provincial courts and assemblies, and the concentration of all the authority of the state in the metropolis, every thing has come to depend on its determinations, the ruling power at the Tuileries has never failed to be obeyed from the Channel to the Pyrenees ; and the subjection of France to the mobs of Paris has become greater than that of the Empire was to the Prætorian bands.¹

16.
Lasting
effects of
these
changes.

¹ Vicomte
St Chamans,
sur la Rév.
82.

Before this great change had taken place, the Assembly

* “Au milieu des fédérations, allait se multipliant la fédération naturelle, le mariage ; serment civique, serment d’hymen, se faisaient ensemble à l’autel. Les mariages — chose inouïe ! — furent plus nombreux d’un cinquième en cette belle année d’espérance.”—MICHELET, *Histoire de la Révolution*, ii. 204.

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17.
New Hall of
the Assem-
bly and in-
troduction
of the guillo-
tine.
Nov. 9.

Dec. 10.

had commenced its sittings in the Riding-School Hall, (*Salle du Manège*,) near the Tuileries, between that palace and the Palais Royal, where the Rue de Rivoli is now situated ; and the memorable scenes of that body, of the succeeding Assembly, and of the Convention, took place in that room. The parties took their seats on the right and left, as they had done in the *Salle de l'Archevêché*. The centre, or "plain," as it was called, became at the same time a place of importance, as the members who sat there clearly held the balance between the extremes on the right hand and the left. Shortly after, Dr Guillotin brought forward a long and laboured motion for the reformation of the penal code ; and proposed that, instead of the axe of the executioner, or any other kind of death, one uniform mode of punishment should be adopted in all capital cases, which should consist of a heavy knife, descending in a frame on the neck of the condemned person. This proposal was adopted by the Assembly, and the new machine obtained the name, from its inventor, of the *GUILLOTINE*. "With the aid of my machine," said M. Guillotin, "I will make the head spring off in the twinkling of an eye, and the victim shall feel nothing." But the researches of men of science since that time, and the ample experience of its effects which the Revolution afforded, have suggested a doubt, it is to be feared on probable grounds, whether this supposed humanity is really as well founded as the friends of lenity in punishment would wish. There is reason to fear that the head, in some cases, may retain sensation, and even recollection, for some minutes, even as much as ten, after it has been severed from the body. Melancholy examples of this will occur in the sequel of this work.^{1*}

¹ Hist. Parl.
iii. 307, 447.

Meanwhile an investigation was commenced before the

* It has been demonstrated by modern physiologists, that the heads of animals sometimes hear, see, and feel, for ten, fifteen, and even eighteen minutes, after being severed from the body.—(See, in particular, Jégallon's experiments.) The same has been observed of human beings ; it having been ascertained that decapitated heads have given unequivocal signs of a retention

High Court of Châtelet, at the instance of the Procureur du Roi, on the information of the public prosecutor of the city of Paris, as to “the *authors* of the troubles of the 5th and 6th October.” Though the greatest pains were taken to stifle this inquiry, and direct it from its proper object, yet it went on, and the evidence and revelations which it brought out soon attracted general notice. Above two hundred witnesses were examined during the course of many months, and at length it was clearly proved, that the Orleans conspirators had taken advantage of the excitement in Paris, owing to the high price of provisions, to direct the vehemently excited mob to Versailles, in the hope that the King would take to flight, and the Duke of Orleans might be declared lieutenant-general of the kingdom. The proceedings, however, were found to implicate too many persons of importance to permit of their being followed out. Mirabeau, in particular, was so clearly pointed at in the evidence, that M. Chabroud, who drew up the report, alluded in its commencement to the “great criminals whom it involved.” After a vehement debate, in which that great orator exerted all his talent, and evinced all his influence in his own defence, the Assembly, fearful of implicating so many of its members, determined that there was no ground for ulterior proceedings. No one was surprised at this result—it had been distinctly foreseen throughout. But the magnanimity which the proceedings brought to light on the part of the Queen, excited universal admiration in every generous breast. When pressed by the committee of the municipality of Paris, and also by a deputation from the Court at Châtelet, to state what she knew or had seen on the occasion, she answered, “Never will I become an informer against the subjects of the King: I have seen everything, known everything, and forgotten everything.”¹

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18.

Inquiry at
the Court of
Châtelet in-
to the out-
rages of 5th
and 6th Oct.
at Versailles.
Dec. 1.

¹ Bert de
Moll, iii.
332, 347.
Hist. Parl.
viii. 336, 339.

of will, by fixing their eyes on loved objects, or moving the lips as if in an effort to speak; and this is particularly the case with those who die with most courage and resolution.—See *Histoire Parlementaire*, iii. 447, 448; and *Journal de Progrès des Sciences Médicales—Essai sur le Système Nerveux*.

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19.
Excessive
embarrass-
ment of the
finances.

The constant embarrassment of the finances next occupied the attention of the Assembly. All the measures taken for the relief of the public necessities, since the convocation of the States-general, had proved utterly unavailing. The nation, in truth, was subsisting entirely on borrowed money: the revenue had almost everywhere failed, and the public debt had increased in the last three years by the enormous amount of 1,200,000,000 francs, or nearly £50,000,000 sterling.* Matters had at length reached a crisis: the capitalists, so long the ardent supporters of the Revolution, had become sensible of its tendency, and would not advance a shilling to the public service. The contribution of a fourth part of the revenue of every individual, granted to the entreaties of Necker and the eloquence of Mirabeau, had produced but a momentary relief; it had proved, from the general emigration of the noblesse, and universal stagnation of commerce, much less productive than had been expected. The confusion of public affairs rendered all sources of revenue unavailing, and some decisive measure had become indispensable, to fill up the immense deficit which the Revolution had produced.† In this emergency, the property of the church was the first fund which presented itself, and it was sacrificed without mercy to the public necessities.¹

Talleyrand, bishop of Autun, proposed that the ecclesiastical property should be devoted to the support of the ministers of religion, and the payment of the public debt. In support of this spoliation he argued: "The clergy are not proprietors, but depositaries of their estates; no

* Total debt in April 1787,	3,002,000,000 francs or £120,080,000
Ditto in April 1790,	4,241,000,000 ... or 169,640,000
Increase, . . .	1,239,000,000 ... or £49,560,000

— See CALONNE, 74.

† "Il fallait donc de nouvelles ressources, et elles étaient toutes épuisées: il fallait du crédit, et il était anéanti: cependant l'infâme banqueroute était là: il fallait l'écarter à l'instant, ou souiller de la tache la plus honteuse la gloire Français." *Deux Amis*, iv. 2.

¹ Hist. Parl.
iii. 147, 152.
Deux Amis,
iv. 1, 2.

individual can maintain any right of property, or inheritance in them; they were bestowed originally by the munificence of kings or nobles, and may now be resumed by the nation which has succeeded to their rights. It is not necessary to destroy the entire body of the clergy, who are required for the purposes of worship; but it is alike just and expedient to extinguish those ecclesiastical incorporations, those agglomerations of property which are useless and hurtful. The enjoyment of this power by the nation gives its representatives an equal title to interfere with the present distribution of church property. All the benefices without charges attached to them may immediately be confiscated to the profit of the nation; and even in regard to those to which duty is attached, it is clear that the only portion of their funds which is really sacred is what is required for the decent support of the incumbent, or maintenance of the hospital or college to which it belongs. By undertaking the burden of these, therefore, the nation may now, with perfect justice, appropriate the whole ecclesiastical estates." This proposal, seconded by Thouret, was supported by Mirabeau, Barnave, Garat, and the whole strength of the Revolutionary party.¹

To this it was replied by the Abbé Maury and Sièyes: "It is an unfounded assertion that the property of the church is at the disposal of the state; it came from the munificence or piety of individuals in former ages, and was destined to a peculiar purpose, totally different from secular concerns. If the purposes originally intended cannot be carried into effect, it should revert to the heirs of the donors, but certainly does not accrue to the legislature. This great measure of spoliation is the first step in revolutionary confiscation, and will soon be followed up by the seizure of property of every description: and it is, in truth, a sacrifice of the provinces, and their estates, to the capitalists of the metropolis who hold the public debt, and the vociferous mob who rule the counsels

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20.
Argument
of Tally-
rand in
favour of
church
spoliation.
2d Oct.¹ Deux
Amis, iv.
4, 5. Hist.
Parl. iii.
151, 152.

21.

Answer of
the Abbé
Maury and
Sièyes.

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of the Assembly. The clergy have enjoyed their possessions for a thousand years—is there a noble or proprietor in the land who can exhibit a title as ancient? Are the immense sacrifices of their possessions the clergy have already made—their junction with the Tiers Etat, which first gave victory to the cause of the Revolution—to go for nothing? Is destitution, confiscation, and beggary, the reward which France reserves for the first, the most important, the most valued friends of freedom? The benefices, in some cases, are without cures—pray, what are the fortunes of the nobles, the wealth of the capitalists? A thousand francs a-year would maintain every one of these gentlemen; the rest, according to your argument, is at the disposal of the nation. Have they a cure attached to them? And are you prepared to apply a test to property, as liable or not liable to confiscation, which would at once place within the former category the whole property of the nation, above what was necessary for the bare subsistence of its possessors?"¹

¹ Moniteur, 30th Oct. to 2d Nov. 1789. Hist. Parl. iii. 256.

22.

Confiscation of the property of the church. 2d Nov.

But it was all in vain. The property of the church was estimated at two thousand millions of francs, £80,000,000; this appeared a fund sufficient, at least for a considerable time, to maintain the clergy, endow the hospitals for the poor, defray the interest of the public debt, and meet the expenses of the civil establishment. To a revolutionary government, overwhelmed with debt, the temptation was irresistible; and, in spite of the eloquence of the Abbé Maury and the efforts of the clergy, it was decreed, by a great majority, that the ecclesiastical property should be put at the disposal of the nation. The funds thus acquired were enormous; the church lands were above a third of the whole landed property of the kingdom. The clergy were declared a burden upon the state, and thenceforward received their incomes from the public treasury. But the Assembly made a wretched provision for the support of religion.² The income of the Archbishop of Paris was fixed at £2000

² Mig. i. 104. Toul. i. 170. Th. i. 193, 194. Chateaubriand, Etud. Hist. iii. 234. Hist. Parl. iii. 256, 258. Deux Amis, iii. 20, 21. Lac. viii. 24. Th. i. 195.

a-year (50,000 francs); that of the superior bishoprics at 25,000 francs, or £1000 a-year; that of the inferior at £750; that of the smallest at £500 a-year. The curés of the larger parishes received 2000 francs, or £80 a-year; 1500 francs, or £60, in the middle-sized; and 1200 francs, or £48, in the smallest. The incomes of the greater part of the clergy, especially the great beneficiaries, were, by this change, reduced to one-fifth of their former amount.*

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The arguments which prevailed with the Assembly were the same as those urged on similar occasions by all who endeavour to appropriate the property of public bodies. It is, no doubt, plausible to say, that religion, if true, should be able to maintain itself; that the public will support those who best discharge its duties; and that no preference should be given to the professors of any peculiar form of faith. But experience has demonstrated that these arguments are fallacious, and that religion speedily falls into discredit unless its teachers are not only maintained, but amply maintained, at the public expense, or from separate property of their own. The marked and almost unaccountable irreligion of a large proportion of the French, in the great towns, ever since the Revolution, is a sufficient proof that the support of property, and a certain portion of worldly splendour, are requisite to maintain even the cause of truth. The reason is apparent. It arises from the difference between immediate interests, obvious to all, and ultimate interests, powerful only with a few. Worldly enjoyments are agreeable in the outset, and only painful in the end. Religious truth is unpalatable at first, and its salutary effects are only experienced after the lapse of time. Hence, the first may be safely intrusted to the inclinations or taste of

23.
Reflections
on this step.

* This decisive measure of spoliation was carried by a majority of 568 to 341. Forty declined voting, and 246 were absent. As resistance to this spoliation was unpopular, it may be presumed that in secret they disapproved of it, but stayed away from fear. Had they come forward and opposed the great measure of robbery, it might have been prevented and the whole character of the Revolution changed. — *Histoire Parlementaire*, iii. 256.

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individuals ; the last require the support or direction of the state. If individuals are left to choose for themselves, they will select the best architects or workmen ; but it does by no means follow that they will pitch upon the best religious guides. The ardent will follow, not the most reasonable, but the most captivating ; the selfish or indifferent, the most accommodating ; the wicked, none at all. Those who most require reformation will be the last to seek it. An established church, and ecclesiastical property, are required to relieve the teachers of religion from the necessity of bending to the views, or sharing in the fanaticism, of the age. Those who live by the support of the public will never be backward in conforming to its inclinations. When children may be allowed to select the medicines they are to take in sickness, or the young the education which is to fit them for the world, the clergy may be left to the voluntary support of the public, but not till then.

24.

Leads to the
sale of the
church pro-
perty, and
the issuing
of assignats.

This violent measure led to another, attended by consequences still more disastrous. The church estates were immense, but no purchasers for them could be found ; and it was indispensable immediately to raise a fund on the security of the property thus acquired. The necessities of the state required the immediate sale of ecclesiastical property to the amount of 400,000,000 of livres, or £16,000,000 sterling ; to facilitate it, the municipality of Paris, and of the principal cities of the kingdom, became the purchasers in the first instance, trusting to reimbursement by the sale of the property, in smaller portions, to individuals. But an insuperable difficulty arose in finding money sufficient to discharge the price of so extensive a purchase before the secondary sales were effected ; to accomplish this, the expedient was adopted of issuing promissory notes of the municipality to the public creditors, which might pass current till the period of their payment arrived. This was immediately done ; but when they became due, still no means of discharging them existed, and recourse was

13th Dec.

19th Dec.

had to government bills, which might possess a legal circulation, and pass for money from one end of the kingdom to the other. Thus arose the system of ASSIGNATS, the source of more public strength, and private suffering, than any other measure in the Revolution. By a decree of the Assembly, passed in the following spring, government was authorised to issue assignats to the amount of 400,000,000 francs, or about £16,000,000 sterling, to be secured on the domains of the crown, and the ecclesiastical property to that value. Thus was the public hand for the first time laid on private property, and the dangerous benefit experienced of discharging obligations without providing funds at the moment for their liquidation—an expedient fostering to industry, and creative of strength in the first instance; but ruinous to both in the end, if not accompanied by prudent management, and based on provision made for ultimate payment. It is a remarkable fact, that this irrevocable step was taken by the Assembly in direct opposition to the opinions of the country. Out of thirty-seven addresses from the principal commercial cities of France, only *seven* were in favour of assignats. The clamour of demagogues, the passion for spoliation, and financial necessity, had already overturned the whole influence of property, whether landed or commercial, and perverted from its original objects the entire principles of the Revolution.¹

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1790.

March 17,
and April 9,
1790.

¹ Decree,
22d April.
Hist. Parl.
v. 321, 325.
Deux Amis,
iv. 154, 157.
Hist. Parl.
iv. 4, 16, 37,
292. Th. i.
234, 235.
Calonne, 23.

By this means, the alienation of the ecclesiastical property was rendered irrevocable, and the foundation of a paper circulation, inconvertible into the precious metals, laid in the kingdom. The necessities of the state made the continuance and extension of the system in future years unavoidable; and this led to a third consequence, more important in the end than either of the former—viz. the establishment of a vast body of small landholders, whose properties had sprung out of the Revolution, and whose interests were identified with its continuance. The public creditor was not compelled, in the first instance, to accept

25.
And to the
subdivision
of land.

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1790.

land instead of money, but he received assignats, which passed current in the market, and ultimately came into the hands of some prudent or far-seeing individuals, who made them the investment of a little capital, and, instead of circulating them as money, presented them for discharge, and received small fragments of the ecclesiastical estates. The extreme difficulty of finding a secure place of deposit for funds in those distracted times, and the innumerable bankruptcies of mercantile men which took place during the progress of the Revolution, produced an universal opinion among the labouring classes, that the purchase of land was the only safe way of disposing of money. And this feeling, coupled with the excessive depreciation which the assignats afterwards reached, and the great accession to the national domains which the confiscated estates of the nobles produced, occasioned that universal division of landed property which forms the most striking feature in the modern condition of France. It existed, as Arthur Young had noticed, in the *Pays d'Etat*, about a fourth of France, before the Revolution ; it now became universal.¹

¹ Baron de Stael, 72.
Mig. i. 106.
Toul. i. 179.
De Tocqueville, France avant la Rév., 204, 207.

26.
The clergy vehemently resist.

The clergy, finding the administration of a large portion of their estates transferred to the municipalities, and a paper money created which was to be paid from their sale, were seized with the most violent apprehensions. As a last resource, they offered to lend the state the 400,000,000 francs upon being reinvested with their property ; but this offer, as tending to throw doubt upon the confiscation of their estates, was immediately rejected. The utmost efforts were immediately made by the church to excite public opinion against the Revolution. The pulpits resounded with declamations against the Assembly ; and the sale of the ecclesiastical estates was universally represented to be, as in truth it was, iniquitous in the highest degree. But these efforts were in vain. Some disturbances broke out in the south of France, and blood was shed in many of the provinces in defence of the priesthood,

but no general or national movement took place ; the emigration of the nobles had deprived the peasantry in the country of their natural leaders, and after some resistance, the clergy were everywhere dispossessed of their property. The irreligious spirit of the age secured this triumph to the enemies of the Christian faith ; but no violent or unjustifiable proceeding can take place without ultimately recoiling on the nation which commits it. From this flagrant act of injustice may be dated the unconquerable aversion of the clergy in France to the Revolution, and the marked disregard of religious observances which has since distinguished so large a portion of its urban inhabitants. From this may be dated that dissoluteness of private manners which extended with such rapidity during its progress, which has spread the vices of the old noblesse through all the inferior classes of the state, and threatens, in its ultimate effects, to counterbalance all the advantages of the reforms it introduced, by poisoning the fountains of domestic virtue, from which public prosperity must spring. From this, lastly, may be dated the commencement of the fatal system of assignats, which precipitated and rendered irrevocable the march of the Revolution, and ultimately involved in ruin all the classes who participated in this first deed of unpardonable iniquity.¹

The only way in which it is possible to avoid these dreadful calamities, which at once dry up all the sources of national prosperity, is to assume it as a fundamental principle, that the estates set apart for the church are inalienable property, not to be encroached on or impaired, without the same violence which sets aside all private rights. Without that safeguard, ecclesiastical property will, in every country, at some period or other, fall a prey to financial embarrassments. Having no bayonets in its hands, like the army ; having lost the spiritual thunder which maintained its authority in the ages of superstition ; speaking to the future, not the present wants of mankind, it will ever be the first to be sacrificed to the

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1790.

¹ Mig. i. 106.
107. Lac.
vii. 290, 291.
Th. i. 199,
211, 235.
Deux Amis,
iv. 146, 151.
Hist. Parl.
iv. 4, 7.

27.
Only mode
of resisting
these evils.

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VI.

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¹ Burke's
Consid.,
Works, v.
191, 192.

28.

New mod-
elling of the
civil consti-
tution of the
church.
June 1790.

penury of government incident to an advanced state of civilisation, if not protected by the shield of an interest common to it with ordinary proprietors. It is to the firm hold which this principle has on the English nation, that Mr Burke ascribes the long duration and extensive usefulness of its national establishment.¹*

The interior organisation of the church next came under the revision of the Assembly. The bishoprics were reduced to the same number as the departments; the clergy and bishops declared capable of being chosen only by the electors who were intrusted with the nomination of deputies; the cathedrals and the chapters suppressed, and the regular orders replaced by parochial clergy. It is a remarkable fact that in some of the discussions on the ecclesiastical establishment at this period, Robespierre supported the church. In particular, on 30th May 1790, he moved in the Assembly to allow the parish priests to marry—a step which procured for him the thanks of the clergy over all France. He continued his support of the clergy on various occasions, until he was warned of the danger he incurred by the murmur, when he rose to speak, "*Passez au Côté Droit!*"† In the reforms which were adopted, if we except the election of

* "The people of England," says Mr Burke, "never have suffered, and never will suffer, the fixed estate of the church to be converted into a pension, to depend on the treasury, and to be delayed, withheld, or perhaps extinguished by fiscal difficulties, which may sometimes be pretended for political purposes, and are in fact often brought about by the extravagance, negligence, and rapacity of politicians. They will not turn their independent clergy into ecclesiastical pensioners. They tremble for their liberty from the influence of a clergy dependent on the crown—they tremble for the public tranquillity from the disorders of a factious clergy, if they were made to depend on any other than the crown. For the consolation of the feeble and the instruction of the ignorant, they have identified the estate of the church with the mass of private property, of which the state is not the proprietor, either for use or dominion, but only the guardian and regulator—they have ordained that the provision of this establishment should be as stable as the earth on which it stands, and not fluctuate with the oscillations of funds and actions."

† Robespierre supported the reduction of the church to bishops and parochial clergy by these characteristic arguments: "Premier principe—Toutes les fonctions publiques sont d'institution sociale; elles ont pour but, l'ordre et le bonheur de la société; il s'ensuit qu'il ne peut exister dans la société aucune fonction qui ne soit utile. Devant cette maxime

Robespierre's
speech on
the Church
Establish-
ment.

the clergy and bishops by the people—for which they were manifestly disqualified, and which is utterly inconsistent with a national establishment—nothing flagrantly unjust was attempted. The church, purified of its corruptions, and freed from its splendid but invidious appendages, might still have maintained its respectability, had no spoliation of its possessions previously taken place. But the progress of the Revolution, and the efforts of more audacious reformers, soon completed its destruction.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
iv. 397, 399;
v. 216. Mig.
i. 107, 108.
Th. i. 240.

The judicial establishment underwent a total change about the same period. The parliaments of the provinces were suppressed. The work of destruction had now become so common that the annihilation of these ancient courts, coeval with the monarchy, hardly excited any attention. New tribunals were created throughout the whole country on the most democratic basis; the judges were appointed, not by the crown, but by the electors; that is—by the whole labouring classes. So widespread were the judicial functions, under this system, that the judges in France amounted to the enormous number of one hundred thousand—the magistrates to that of *twelve hundred thousand*.^{*} Even the power of pardon was taken from the

29.
Judicial
establish-
ment.
May 4.

disparaissaient les bénéfices et les établissemens sans objet, les cathédrales, les collégiates, les curés, et tous les archevêques que ne demandent pas les besoins publics. Second principe—Les officiers ecclésiastiques étant institués pour le bonheur des hommes et pour le bien du peuple, il s'ensuit que le peuple doit les nommer. Il est de principe qu'il doit conserver tous les droits qu'il peut exercer; or le peuple peut élire ses pasteurs comme les magistrats et autres officiers publics. Troisième principe—Les officiers publics étant établis pour le bien de la société, il s'ensuit que la mesure de leur traitement doit être subordonnée à l'intérêt et à l'utilité générale—et non au désir de gratifier et d'enrichir ceux qui doivent exercer ces fonctions." Here is the principle of a voluntary church clearly and manfully stated, and traced back to its true origin and only feasible basis, the principle of *utility*. Robespierre's *deductions*, as will appear clearly in the sequel, were all correct; his whole errors and crimes arose from his setting out with false principles. Everything in this question turns on the meaning of the word "*utility*." Is it pecuniary or spiritual utility? economy in this world, or salvation in the next? It is refreshing, amidst the declamation of the Revolution, to read his speeches; they so uniformly go back to principle, though those principles are universal innocence in the people, vice in the governors, and worldly utility.—See *Histoire Parlementaire*, vi. 22, 31.

^{*} "La nouvelle loi créa douze cent mille magistrats municipaux. L'organ-

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sovereign. Trial by jury was universally introduced, and the jurymen were taken indiscriminately from all classes of citizens. Reforms of the most salutary description were effected in the criminal courts; trials were made public, the accused allowed counsel, and indulged with every facility for their defence. The inhuman punishments which disgraced the ancient monarchy were abolished, and the punishment of death was limited to a smaller class of delinquencies. The cognisance of charges of high treason was intrusted to a supreme court at Orleans; but it must be added, to the glory of the National Assembly, that during their continuance not one trial took place before it. A new tribunal, entitled the Court of Cassation, was established at Paris to revise the sentences of inferior tribunals: the utility of this institution was such, that it has been continued through all the subsequent changes of government.¹

¹ Hist. Parl. v. 408, 477. Lac. vii. 344, 346. Th. i. 238.

30.
Efforts of
the clergy to
dissolve the
Assembly.
April 19.

The revolutionary party having now declared open war against the church, the partisans of the latter exerted themselves to the utmost to abridge the duration or operations of the Assembly. The moment was favourable, as the period when its powers should expire had arrived: the deputies were only appointed for a year, and that time had now elapsed. The clergy and aristocratic party took advantage of this circumstance to insist that the Assembly should be dissolved and reappointed by the electors, as they were well aware that the abolition of all the parliaments, courts of law, and incorporations, in the provinces, and the total confiscation of the property of the church, had created such violent heart-burnings among the people as would probably render the next Assembly decidedly anti-revolutionary. To support that proposal they urged the sovereignty of the people, so

isation judiciaire créa cent mille juges, dont cinq mille de paix et quatre-vingt mille assesseurs des juges de paix." *Atlas National de la France*, 1791 dédié à l'Assemblée; and MICHELLE, *Histoire de la Révolution*, i. 158, 159. Talleyrand, in his speech on 8th June 1790, estimated the active citizens at 3,600,000. *Histoire Parlementaire*, 8th June 1790.

recently proclaimed as the basis of government by the popular leaders. “Without doubt,” says Chapelier, “sovereignty resides in the people ; but that principle has no application in the present instance. The dissolution of the Assembly, before the work of the constitution is finished, would lead to the destruction of the constitution ; it is now urged by the enemies of freedom, with no other view but to secure the revival of despotism, of feudal privileges, court prodigality, and all the countless evils which follow in the train of these.”—“We deceive ourselves,” replied the Abbé Maury, “when we speak of perpetuating our own power. When did we become a National Assembly ? Has the oath of the 20th June absolved us from that which we took to our constituents ? The constitution is finished ; you have nothing now to do but declare that the King possesses the executive power ; we are sent here for no other purpose but to secure the influence of the people upon the legislature, and prevent the imposition of taxes without their consent. Our duties being now discharged, I strenuously resist every decree which shall interfere with the rights of the electors. The founders of liberty should be the last to invade the rights of others ; we undermine our own authority, when we trench upon the privileges of those by whom it was conferred.”¹

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1790.

¹ Hist. Parl.
v. 381, 385.

Loud applause followed these energetic words ; but Mirabeau immediately ascended the tribune. “We are asked,” said he, “when our powers began—how, from being simple deputies of bailiwicks, we became a national convention ? I reply, from the moment when, finding our place of assembly surrounded by bayonets, we swore rather to perish than abandon our duties towards the nation. Our powers have, since that great event, undergone a total change ; whatever we have done has been sanctioned by the unanimous consent of the nation. We became a national convention when, but for us, the nation would have perished. You all remember the saying of

31.

Mirabeau's
speech in
reply.

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VI.
1790.

¹ Hist. Parl.
v. 381, 395.
Mig. i. 109.
111. Th. i.
218. Fer-
rières, Me-
moires, i. 237.

the ancient patriot, who had neglected legal forms to save his country. Summoned by a factious opposition to answer for his infraction of the laws, he replied, ‘I swear that I have saved my country.’ Gentlemen, I swear that you have saved France.” The Assembly, electrified by this appeal, rose by a spontaneous movement, and declared its session permanent, till the formation of the constitution was completed. Thenceforward they had not a shadow of legal title for their proceedings : the period for which they had been elected had expired, and by sheer usurpation, without venturing to appeal to the people, they continued their powers.¹

32.
Discussion
as to vest-
ing right
of making
peace and
war in the
crown.
May 20.

Having thus, by a decree of their own, resolved to prolong their powers, the Assembly next entered on the consideration of the important question—in whom, under the new constitution, the powers of declaring peace and war should be vested ? A difference which had arisen between Great Britain and Spain, which threatened hostilities at no distant period, brought the necessity of determining this question prominently forward. It was discussed with great vehemence in the Assembly for above a fortnight ; and, as the result appeared at one period doubtful, the Revolutionists had recourse to their usual resource of getting up mobs in the streets, and threatening a civil war. Mirabeau, who had now become sensible of the perilous tendency of the Revolution, and began to thirst for employment from the crown, since he had become hopeless of the success of treason under the Duke of Orleans, on this occasion gave the first indication of a change of policy, by proposing, as a middle course, that the right of declaring peace and war should be vested in the King and the Assembly jointly. Instantly he became suspected by the people : rumour spread abroad that he had been gained by the court, and the “Grande Trahison du Comte Mirabeau” was hawked through the streets.² At the same time, the excitement became so vehement that it was openly announced in the Revolutionary jour-

² Hist. Parl.
vi. 31, 132.
Moniteur,
15th May
1790, p. 547.
Lab. iv. 232,
236.

nals that, if this power were not conceded exclusively to the Assembly, it would lead to a general massacre of the nobles and clergy, and the most frightful convulsions.*

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1790.

“ If, on this subject,” said Mirabeau, “ we had much to fear from the ambition of kings and the corruption of their ministers, have we nothing to apprehend from the enthusiasm of a large Assembly, which may mistake a false resentment for the dictates of wisdom, or the counsels of experience ? Read the history of republics, and you will see that ambition has always precipitated them into the most unjust and barbarous wars. Is it not under the empire of the passions that political assemblies have ever resolved on war ? Are we to reckon as nothing the inconvenience of convoking the Assembly, when action, and decided action, is called for ? Can we hope to maintain our constitution, if forms essentially at variance with a monarchy are introduced into it ? Rome was destroyed by the strife of monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic forms. A powerful citizen is more dangerous than a victorious king in such a republic. What were Hannibal and Cæsar to Carthage and Rome ? (*Vehement clamour.*) Do not suppose I am to be intimidated by your threats. A few days ago the people wished to carry me in triumph, and now they cry in the streets ‘ Great Treason of Count Mirabeau.’ I had no need of that lesson to learn, that there is little distance between the Capitol and the Tarpeian rock ; but the man who combats for truth, for his country, is not so easily put down. He who is conscious of having deserved well of the commonwealth—

33.
Mirabeau's
speech in
favour of
the crown
on this point.

* “ Si le droit de la guerre et de la paix eût été accordé au Roi, c'en était fait ; la guerre civile éclatait dans la nuit du Samedi au Dimanche, et aujourd'hui Paris nagerait en sang. A minuit le tocsin aurait appelé les citoyens aux armes : le château des Tuileries eût été livré aux flammes ; le peuple eût pris sous sa sauvegarde le Monarque et sa famille ; mais St Priest, mais Necker, mais Montmorin, auraient été lanternés, et leurs têtes promenées dans la capitale. Qu'on se figure tous les attentats qu'une pareille nuit aurait couverts de son ombre ; les massacres, les brigandages, le son des cloches, le fracas de l'artillerie, les cris des mourans ! Aucun aristocrate n'aurait échappé à la fureur du peuple.”—*Orateur du Peuple*, par FRERON, 23 Mai 1790.

CHAP.
VI.

1790.

20th May.
¹ Hist. Parl.
 vi. 84, 112.
 Moniteur,
 May 22,
 1790, pp.
 574, 575.
 Lab. iv.
 276, 280.

who covets no vain celebrity, and disdains the success of a day for real glory ; he who is determined to tell the truth, independent of the fluctuating waves of public opinion, bears within himself his own reward. He awaits his destiny, the only reward which really interests him, from the hand of time, which does justice to all." But it was all in vain ; fear of the people prevailed over the eloquence of Mirabeau, the fervour of the Abbé Maury ; and the power of declaring peace and war was, without qualification, vested in the National Assembly.¹

34.
 Settlement
 on the
 crown.

June 10.
² Hist. Parl.
 vi. 246, 249.
 Lac. viii. 48.
 Th. i. 238.

Satisfied with having wrested this important prerogative from the crown, the Assembly, in pecuniary matters, acted with liberality towards the sovereign. Louis demanded twenty-five millions of francs (£1,000,000 sterling) annually for his household expenses and civil list, which was instantly granted ; and the jointure of the Queen was fixed at four million of francs, or £160,000 a-year. A conceding monarch is always, for a brief space, a favourite with a democratic legislature.²

35.
 Abolition
 of titles of
 honour.
 June 20.

In the fervour of innovation, titles of honour could not long be maintained. M. Lamboin proposed, and Charles Lameth seconded, a decree, "That the titles of duke, count, marquis, viscount, baron, and chevalier, should be suppressed." "Hereditary nobility, said the latter, "wounds equally reason and true liberty. There can be no political equality, no virtuous emulation, where citizens have other dignities than those belonging to their office, or arising from their virtues." "Let us annihilate," said M. de Noailles, "those vain titles, the arrogance of pride, and ignorance, and vanity. It is time that we should have no distinctions save those arising from virtue. What should we say to Marquis Franklin, Count Washington, Baron Fox ? Will such titles ever confer the lustre attaching to the simple Franklin, Fox, Washington ? I give my warmest support to the motion, and would add to it, that liveries should be abolished." "A nobility," replied the Abbé Maury, "is part of our constitution :

destroy the nobility, and there is no monarchy." So determined were the Assembly to extinguish honours, that the decree was passed in an evening sitting with very little discussion. The noblesse and the clergy made vain efforts to prevent the sacrifice ; but it was carried by an overwhelming majority.¹

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VI.

1790.

¹ Hist. Parl.
vi. 284, 293.

Thus in one day fell the ancient and venerable institution of feudal nobility ; an institution sprung from conquest, and cradled in pride, but productive of great and important consequences on the social body, and the cause of the chief distinction between European and Asiatic civilisation. The conquests of the East have seldom produced any lasting institutions, because they have always depended on a single race of warriors, who left behind neither honours nor hereditary possessions to perpetuate the fabric of society. Hence everything has been ephemeral in Eastern dynasties ; national glory, public prosperity, have in every age been as shortlived as their original founders. In Europe, on the other hand, the establishment of hereditary dignities, and of the right of primogeniture, has perpetuated the influence of the first leaders of the people ; and, by creating a class whose interests were permanent, has given a degree of durability to human institutions, unknown in any other age or quarter of the globe. Whatever may be said of the vanity of titles, and the unworthy hands into which they frequently descend, it cannot be denied that they have stamped its peculiar character upon European civilisation ; that they created the body of nobility who upheld the fabric of society through the stormy periods of anarchy and barbarism, and laid the first foundation of freedom, by forming a class governed by lasting interests, and capable, in every age, of withstanding the efforts of despotic power. Whether the necessity of such a class is now superseded by the extension of knowledge and the more equal diffusion of property, and whether a system of tempered liberty can subsist without an intermediate body

36.
Reflections
on this
change.

CHAP. VI. interposed between the power of the crown and the ambition of the people, are questions which time alone can resolve, but on which the leaders of the French Revolution had unquestionably no materials to form an opinion.

1790.

37.
Military organisation.

But all these changes, great and important as they were, yielded in importance to the military organisation which at this period took place throughout all France. The progress of the Revolution, the overthrow of the invading armies, the subjugation of the European powers, were mainly owing to the military establishments which sprang up during the first fervour of patriotic exertion. The army of France, under the old government, partook of the aristocratic spirit of the age: the higher grades of military rank were exclusively reserved for the court nobility; and even ordinary commissions were bestowed only on those whose birth or connections united them to the favoured class of landed proprietors. The consequences of such an exclusive system, in an age of advancing civilisation, might easily have been anticipated. The privates and non-commissioned officers had no interest in common with their superiors, and, like the parochial clergy, felt their own inclinations coincide with those of the Tiers Etat. Hence the rapid and decisive defection of the whole army, the moment that they were brought into collision with the Revolution, and exposed to the contagion of popular enthusiasm. Injudicious changes in the regulation of the household troops had recently introduced extensive dissatisfaction even amongst that favoured body, and furnished a pretext for the revolt of the Guard, which was the immediate cause of the fall of the royal authority.¹

¹ Toul. i. 124, 126, 127.

38.
Extraordinary difficulties experienced by the military in contending with the people.

The difficulties experienced by the military in all contests with the populace at this time were so great, that they practically amounted to an entire suspension of the authority of government. The duties of a municipal officer, or of the commander of a fortress, were more appalling than those arising from the most formidable force of regular enemies. In most places the troops,

seized with the same mutinous spirit as the nation, refused to act against the insurgents, or openly ranged themselves on their side. A handful of mutineers—a despicable rabble—were thus sufficient to make the governor of a citadel tremble : every act of vigour, even in self-defence, came to be considered as a capital crime ; and the clamours of the populace were regarded with more alarm than the thunder of the enemy's artillery. It was universally felt, that in all contests between the military and the people, the officers, even if obeyed by their men, ran far greater risks than the mob to whom they were opposed : if not so obeyed, their immediate destruction was inevitable. Hence anarchy was universal in the army, and more formidable than among the people, from the arms and superior discipline which the former possessed. Out of a hundred and twenty battalions and eighty squadrons that M. de Bouillé had under his command in the east of France, he could only reckon on five battalions, all of them composed of foreign troops, as likely in a crisis to support the royal cause. Mirabeau became fully sensible, when it was too late, of the ruinous consequences of such a distracted state of things, and proposed to remedy it by the proclamation of martial law ; but the Assembly, terrified at the very thought of offending the nation, did not venture to adopt so vigorous a step ;* and even if passed, how could it have been enforced against the recreant military, themselves the culprits ? Shortly after

* M. de la Tour Dupin, minister of war, on the 4th June 1790, gave the following account, in a Report to the Assembly, of the disorders of the army :—“ His Majesty has this day sent me to apprise you of the multiplied disorders of which every day he receives the most distressing intelligence. The army is threatened with ultra-anarchy. Entire regiments have dared to violate at once the respect due to the laws, to the order established by your decrees, and to the oaths which they have taken with the most awful solemnity. Whilst you are indefatigable in moulding the empire into one coherent and consistent body, the administration of the army exhibits nothing but disturbance and confusion. The bonds of discipline are relaxed or broken—the most unheard-of pretensions are avowed without disguise—the ordinances are without force, the chiefs without authority—the military chest and the colours carried off—the authority of the King himself is proudly defied—the officers are despised, degraded, threatened, or prisoners in the midst of their corps, dragging on a

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VI.

1790.

¹ Bert. de
Moll. Mém.
i. 23, and
Dumont,
202.

the taking of the Bastille, a new oath was tendered to the soldiers, which bound them never to employ their arms against their fellow-citizens, except on the requisition of the civil authorities. This circumstance, immaterial in itself, became important in its consequences, by accustoming the military to other duties, and the protection of other interests, than those of the sovereign.¹

39.
General es-
tablishment
of national
guards.

With extraordinary rapidity the organisation of the national guards, in imitation of that of Paris, was completed over the whole kingdom. The middle classes, everywhere attached to the Revolution, because it promised to remove the disabilities under which they laboured, formed the strength of its battalions; and in a few months three hundred thousand men, enrolled and disciplined in the provinces, were ready to support the popular cause. The influence of this immense body of armed men, great in itself, was increased by the democratic constitution under which it was constructed. Formed in a moment of revolutionary fervour, and during the abeyance of the royal authority, it received no regular organisation from any superior power: the privates elected their own officers, and learned the rudiments of discipline from instructors of their own selection; and these, chosen during a period of extraordinary excitement, were of

precarious life in the bosom of disgust and humiliation. To fill up the measure of all these horrors, the commandants of places have had their throats cut under the eyes, and almost in the arms, of their own soldiers!

"These evils are great, but they are neither the only nor the worst produced by such military insurrections. The nature of things requires that the army should never act except as an instrument. The moment that, erecting itself into a deliberative body, it shall act according to its own resolutions, the government, be it what it may, will immediately degenerate into a military despotism—a species of monster which has always ended by devouring those who produced it."—See *Report*, quoted by BURKE, *Couns.*, Works, v. 377.

So far, however, was the King from listening to this sound advice, that, under the influence of his superstitious dread of occasioning the shedding of blood, he sent round circulars to all the regiments of the army, with orders that the soldiers should join several clubs and confederations in the different municipalities, and mix with them in their feasts and civil entertainments. "Sa Majesté a pensé qu'il convenait que chaque régiment prit part à ces fêtes civiques, pour multiplier les rapports, et resserrer les liens entre les citoyens et les troupes."—*Ibid.* v. 382.

course the most vehement supporters of the power of the people. Hence the marked and steady adherence of this influential body, through all the changes of the Revolution, to the popular side ; and hence the facility with which regular armies were subsequently formed on the same democratic model, on the first call of national danger. The national guard of Paris—thirty thousand strong at ordinary times—under the command of Lafayette, was capable of being increased, by beat of drum, to double that number, all in a tolerable high state of discipline and equipment. But, as usually happens where officers owe their appointment to the privates, his authority became powerless when his commands ran counter to the wishes of his inferiors. On one occasion he resigned the command, and entered an evening party in the dress of the privates. “What, general !” exclaimed the guests ; “we thought you were commander of the national guard.” —“Oh !” said he, “I was tired of obeying, and therefore entered the ranks of the privates.”¹ *

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1790.

¹ Toul. i. 88,
126, 127.

A force, more formidable to the actual administration of government or the magistracy, consisted in a multitude of artisans and manufacturers in all the great towns, armed with pikes, and trained to a certain degree of military discipline. These tumultuous bands, raised in moments of alarm, were always ready for insurrection, and anxious to share in the plunder of the opulent classes. Having nothing to lose themselves, they supported every measure of spoliation and cruelty. The worst of the popular leaders found in them a never-failing support, when the more measured fervour of the national guard was beginning to decline. Their numbers in Paris alone amounted to above fifty thousand ; and their power, always great, received an undue preponderance from the disastrous gift from the municipality of two pieces of cannon to each of the forty-eight sections, shortly after

40.
And of armed pikemen
in the towns.

* The author received this anecdote from his late revered and lamented friend, Professor Dugald Stewart, who was present on the occasion.

CHAP.
VI.

1790.

¹ Lac. vii.
357.

41.
Fearful de-
preciation of
assignats.
June 17 to
Sept. 29.

the capture of the Bastille. These guns were worked by the ablest and most determined of the populace; the higher ranks all shunned that service, from the fatigue with which it was attended. It thus fell into the hands of the most ardent of the lower, and, from their terrible energy, those cannoniers soon acquired a dreadful celebrity in all the bloodiest tragedies of the Revolution.¹

The agitation of the public mind was, during these changes, increased by the fluctuations which the assignats of the country underwent, and the multitudes whom their progressive depreciation reduced to a state of beggary. Government having once experienced the relief from immediate pressure which paper credit never fails in the first instance to afford, speedily returned to the expedient; and fresh issues of assignats, secured upon the church property, appeared upon every successive crisis of finance. Eight hundred millions of new assignats (£32,000,000), in addition to the 400,000,000 (£16,000,000) already in circulation, were authorised to be issued by a decree of the Assembly, on 29th September 1790. This was done, notwithstanding the warning voice of Talleyrand, at the instigation of Mirabeau, who perceived what a body of revolutionary interests and proprietors the measure would soon create.²

² Hist. Parl.
vi. 274.
Toul. i. 204.
Th. i. 254.

42.
Argument
of the Abbé
Maury and
Talleyrand
against their
further
issue.

M. Talleyrand and the Abbé Maury clearly predicted the fatal consequences which would ensue from this continued issue of assignats to meet the wants of the treasury. "You ask," said they, "why should that paper money be always below the metallic currency? It is because distrust will always exist as to the proportion between its amount and the national domains on which it is secured—because for long their sales will be uncertain—because it is difficult to conceive when two thousand millions (£80,000,000), the value of these domains, will be extinguished—because silver issuing at par with paper, both will become objects of merchandise; and *the more plentiful any merchandise becomes, the more it must decline in price.* From this

must necessarily result inextricable confusion—the purchase of land for a nominal value—the discharge of debts for an illusory payment,—and, in a word, a universal change of property, by a system of spoliation so secret that no one can perceive from whence the stroke that ruins him has come. Consider only the effects of an immoderate issue of paper. Not to speak of a circulation of two thousand millions—for no one probably would support such an absurdity—suppose only that the depreciation became ten per cent. The treasury at that rate will gain ten per cent on the whole debt it owes. Is not that national bankruptcy? And, if it continues and increases, will not all debts be thus depreciated, and creditors ruined? Assignats will become an object of commerce and gambling: you will see them rise and fall like bank shares; and, ere long, you will see their holders swallow up the debts of the country, its wealth, and the whole national domains.”¹

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VI.
1790.

¹ *Moniteur*,
Sept. 29, p.
1129; and
Sept. 26,
p. 1114.

Mirabeau exerted himself to the uttermost to support the issue of assignats, and rested his arguments mainly on its obvious tendency to force on the sales and division of the national domains. “I reckon among the number of enemies to the state—as criminal towards the nation—whoever seeks to shake that sacred basis of our social regeneration—the national domains. We have sworn to maintain and complete the constitution: what is our oath if we do not defend the national domains? There is not a lover of freedom, there is not a true Frenchman, who should not strive for this object. Let the sale of the national domains continue; let it continue over the kingdom, and France is saved. It is in vain to assimilate assignats secured on the solid basis of these domains, to an ordinary paper currency, possessing a forced circulation. They represent real property—the most secure of all possessions, the land on which we tread. Why is a metallic circulation solid? Because it is based on subjects of real and durable value, as the land, which is directly or

43.
Mirabeau's
argument in
favour of the
assignats.

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VI.

1790.

indirectly the source of all wealth? Paper money, we are told, will become superabundant; it will drive the metallic out of circulation. Of what paper do you speak? If of a paper without a solid basis, undoubtedly; if of one based on the firm foundation of landed property, never. There may be a difference in the value of circulation of different kinds, but that arises as frequently from the one which bears the higher value being run after, as from the one which stands the lower being shunned—from gold being in demand—not paper at a discount. There cannot be a greater error than the terrors so generally prevalent as to the over-issue of assignats. It is thus alone you will pay your debts, pay your troops, advance the Revolution. Reabsorbed progressively in the purchase of the national domains, this paper money can never become redundant, any more than the humidity of the atmosphere can become excessive, which, descending in rills, finds the rivers, and is at length lost in the mighty ocean.”¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
vi. 240, 271.
Moniteur,
Sept. 28,
pp. 1121,
1126.

44.
Their rapid
fall.
Sept. 29.

These documents at first bore interest at the rate of four per cent; but this was soon discontinued; notwithstanding which, they for some time maintained their value on a par with the metallic currency. By degrees, however, the increasing issue of paper produced its usual effects on public credit; the value of money fell, while that of every other article rose in a high proportion; and at length the excessive inundation of fictitious currency caused a universal panic, and it rapidly sunk to a merely nominal price. Even in June 1790, the depreciation had become so considerable as to excite serious panic, and the attention of the Assembly was anxiously drawn to the means of allaying it; but as they continually went on issuing fresh assignats, their value, of course, underwent a still greater reduction. Eight or nine per cent was all that could be got, after some years, for these dangerous documents, and in many cases they would hardly pass for one-fifteenth of their legal value. So

prodigious a change in the state of the circulating medium occasioned an unparalleled fluctuation in the fortunes of individuals, and augmented to an incredible degree the number of those who were ruined by the public convulsions. But it extended in a proportional measure the ramifications of the Revolution through society, by swelling the number of the holders of national property, and thus enlisting a large influential class, by the strong bond of interest, on its side.¹

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VI.
1790.

¹ Hist. Parl.
vi. 274.
Deux Amis,
Th. i. 204.
Mig. i. 106.
Toul. i. 205.
Lac. viii. 56.

The 14th July, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille, approached, and the patriots resolved to signalise it by a fête worthy of the birth of freedom in the greatest of the European states. A confederation of the whole kingdom in the Champ de Mars was resolved on; and there the King, the deputies of the eighty-four departments, the Assembly, and the national guard, were to take the oath to the constitution. Every exertion was made to render the ceremony imposing. For several weeks before, almost the whole labouring population of Paris had been employed in constructing benches in the form of a theatre in that noble plain, for the innumerable spectators who were expected; while the municipality, the national guard, and the deputies of the departments, vied with each other in their endeavours to signalise their appearance on the stage by the utmost possible magnificence. The presence of the monarch, the National Assembly, a hundred thousand armed men, and above four hundred thousand spectators, it was justly supposed, would impress the imagination of a people even less passionately devoted than the French to theatrical effect.²

45.
Prepara-
tions for a
fête on the
14th July.

² Deux
Amis, v.
148, 154.
Th. i. 245.
Mig. i. 114,
115. Lac.
vii. 359.

Early in the morning of the 14th, all Paris was in motion. Four hundred thousand persons repaired with joyful steps to the Champ de Mars, and seated themselves, amidst songs of congratulation, upon the benches which surrounded the plain. At seven o'clock the procession advanced. The electors, the representatives of the municipality, the presidents of the districts, the national guards,

46.
Particulars
of the fête.

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VI.

1790.

the deputies of the army and of the departments, thirty thousand strong, moved on in order, to the sound of military music, from the site of the Bastille, with banners floating, bearing patriotic inscriptions, and arrayed in varied and gorgeous habiliments. The splendid throng crossed the Seine by a bridge of boats opposite the Ecole Militaire, and entered the amphitheatre under a triumphal arch. They were there met by the King and the National Assembly at the foot of a great altar, erected after the manner of the ancients, in the middle of the plain ; at its foot was a model of the Bastille overturned. Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, and two hundred priests, dressed in tricolor robes, celebrated high mass in presence of the assembled multitude ; after which, Lafayette, as commander-in-chief of the national guards of France, mounted on a superb white charger, advanced and took the oath in the following terms:—"We swear to be faithful to the *nation*, to the *law*, and to the King ; to maintain with all our might the constitution decreed by the National Assembly, and accepted by the King ; and to remain united to all the French by the indissoluble bonds of fraternity." Immediately after, the President of the National Assembly and the King took the oath, and the Queen, lifting the Dauphin in her arms, pledged herself for his adherence to the same sentiments. Discharges of artillery, the rolling of drums, the shouts of the multitude, and the clashing of arms, rent the skies at the auspicious event, which seemed to reunite the monarch and his subjects by the bonds of affection. But a dreadful storm arose at that instant ; the lowering clouds discharged themselves in torrents of rain, and in an instant the innumerable spectators were drenched to the skin. It soon cleared up, however, and in the evening illuminations and festivities prevailed in Paris ; and the King, in a concealed calèche, enjoyed the general expression of happiness. A ball took place upon the site of the Bastille ; over the gate was this inscription—"Ici on danse."¹

¹ Prudhom.
Rév. de
Paris, ii. 53.
54. Moni-
teur, July
16, 1790, p.
807. Deux
Amis, v. 142.
172. Fer.
Mém. i. 18.
23. Mig. i.
117. Lac.
vii. 367.
Th. i. 246,
249.

“They danced in effect,” says a contemporary writer, “with joy and security, on the same spot where formerly fell so many tears—where courage, genius, and innocence have so often wept—where so often were stifled the cries of despair.”

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1790.

These festivities interrupted only for a short period the animosity of the factions against each other. The Duke of Orleans, who had recently returned from his exile in London, was accused before the Assembly soon after, along with Mirabeau, of having conspired to produce the revolt of the 5th October. Never was accusation more ill-timed and unfortunate. At that very moment, Mirabeau, disgusted at the revolutionary proceedings of the Assembly, was secretly lending the aid of his great talents to support the cause of the throne, a course to which he had been inclined ever since the beginning of the year. He had long foreseen the approaching ruin of the state, and had resolved to do his utmost to stem the torrent of those passions he had had so large a share in creating. The Abbé Maury, who took the lead in the impeachment, had become aware, before it came on for debate, that Mirabeau now in secret inclined to the throne, and confessed that the evidence did not warrant any criminal proceedings against that illustrious man; and the fact of his having been accused restored all his popularity, which was beginning to decline. Never did he sway the legislature with more absolute power than when he ascended the tribune to make his defence. The Assembly quashed the accusation, both against Mirabeau and the Duke of Orleans, by adjourning it till the general report of the court at the Châtelet on the proceedings of the 5th October was brought up; but the latter never afterwards regained his reputation, and from that period his influence in the Revolution was at an end.¹

47.
Accusation
of the Duke
of Orleans
and Mira-
beau.
Aug. 8,
1790.

¹ Lac. viii.
83, 84. Mig.
i. 118. Th.
i. 167, 250,
252. Moni-
teur, Aug.
8, 1790.

Cazalès, on this occasion, made a noble speech, and for once compelled the Assembly to listen to the words of truth and justice. “Is there one in the Assembly,” said

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1790.

48.
Noble
speech of
Cazalès on
this occa-
sion.

he, "who can really wish to screen from justice the authors of a crime which has stained the Revolution, and will be its eternal disgrace? (*Loud murmurs.*) Yes, I repeat it, if the authors of the infamous crimes of 5th October are not discovered, are not punished, what will France say? what will Europe say? The asylum of our kings has been violated, the steps of the throne stained with blood; its defenders murdered: infamous assassins have put in danger the life of the daughter of Maria Theresa, the Queen of the French." "We have no queen!" exclaimed a hundred voices. — "Of that woman," then added Cazalès, "whose name will survive those of the infamous conspirators of October 5th—they are deputies; they are Frenchmen; they are men: they are stained by that crime. If you adopt the motion, you at least clear yourselves of the stain; it will rest only on its authors. If you reject it, you adopt the infamy; you earn for the National Assembly the odious title of being at once capable of crimes and above punishment."¹

¹ *Moniteur*,
Aug. 8.
1790, p.
910.

49.
Retirement
of Necker.
Sept. 4.

Shortly after M. Necker retired from the ministry. Ill health was assigned as the motive for this step, which was really taken from a sense of declining influence and lost popularity. His own words had proved prophetic; the day of his triumphant entry into Paris had been the first of his decline. He had lived to see the folly of his favourite opinion, that reason, if forcibly stated and blended with sentiment, would in the end sway the most vehement popular bodies. His resignation, couched in eloquent and touching language,* was received in the Assembly without regret; and he set out for Switzerland, unattended and a fugitive, over the route which he had so lately traversed in triumph. He was arrested at Arcis-sur-Aube, and narrowly escaped the fate from which

* "Les inimitiés, les injustices, dont j'ai fait l'épreuve, m'ont donné l'idée de la garantie que je viens d'offrir; mais quand je rapproche cette pensée de ma conduite dans l'administration des finances, il m'est permis de la réunir aux singularités qui ont accompagné ma vie."—NECKER'S Letter, given in *Histoire Parlementaire*, vii. 164.

he had so generously saved his enemy M. de Besenval. Permission to continue his journey was coldly conceded by the legislature, which owed its existence and popular constitution to his exertions ; a memorable instance of the instability of the applause of the people, but such as must always be looked for in a revolution. Its early promoters are uniformly neglected, when other and more audacious leaders have succeeded ; all classes aim at supremacy ; its course is always onward. None who have risen by its impulse can long maintain their ascendancy, because, by remaining at the head of affairs, they check the elevation of inferior ambition.¹

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1790.

¹ Hist. Parl.
vii. 163.
Mig. i. 118.
Lac. vii. 85.
Th. i. 257,
258.

The retreat of Necker produced a total change in the ministry. Duport du Tertre was made prime minister, Duportail, de Fleurieu, Lambert, and de Lessart, succeeded to the several offices of government. The first, who had risen from a income of 1000 francs a-year (£40) to the rank of prime minister, from the effects of the Revolution, was a zealous partisan of the new order of things, which had done so much for him ; and he owed his appointment to the influence of Lafayette. He was intimately connected with Lameth, Barnave, and the leaders of the Revolution, and represented the dominant party in the Assembly. Sincerely desirous to uphold the constitution, such as they had made it, he experienced ere long the usual difficulty felt by the leaders of a movement at one period, when they attempt to check it at another ; and he became in the end the object of the most envenomed hostility to the Jacobins, when they passed the innovators of the Constituent Assembly in the career of Revolution. Two of these ministers were destined to perish on the scaffold, one by the sword of revolutionary assassins. The period was fast approaching when eminence in public life was a sure passport to a violent death.²

50.
Change of
ministry.
Sept. 5.

² Lac. viii.
92. Th. i.
259. Bert.
de Moll.
Mem. i. 265.

The state of the army was soon such as to require the immediate attention of the Assembly. The recent military

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VI.

1790.

51.
Revolt at
Metz and
Nancy.

Aug. 31.

code was eminently favourable to the inferior officers ; the ancient distinctions and privileges of rank were abolished, and seniority was made the sole title to promotion. In proportion as this change was beneficial to the private soldiers, it was obnoxious to their superiors, who found their advancement obstructed by a multitude of competitors from the inferior ranks, from whom they formerly experienced no sort of hindrance. The result was a general jealousy between the privates and their officers. Where the former preponderated, Jacobin clubs, in imitation of those in the metropolis, were formed, and discipline, regulations, and accoutrements, subjected to the discussion of these self-constituted legislators ; where the latter, dissatisfaction with the established government generally prevailed. Nowhere had the anarchy risen to a higher pitch than in the garrison of Nancy. It was composed of three regiments, one of which was Swiss, the others French ; the proportion of officers in these regiments was much greater than usual in other corps, and they were drawn from a class most hostile to the Revolution. In the Swiss regiment of Chateaufieux, in particular, which had been raised in the country round Lausanne, the fervour of the Revolution was peculiarly violent. It was one of the first regiments of the line which openly declared, on the 14th July 1789, that they would not fire on the people, and thereby occasioned the capture of the Bastille, and overthrow of the monarchy.* After a long series of disputes between them and the privates, who, being decided Revolutionists, could with difficulty be got to submit to the restraints of discipline, it was found that all subordination was at an end.¹ Many concessions had been made to them, which, as usual, only aggravated the mutiny ; and

¹ Bouillé, 137, 140.
Deux Amis, v. 215, 219.
Hist. Parl. vii. 60, 61.
Toul. i. 237, 239. Th. i. 254. Mich.
Hist. de la Rév. ii. 270.

* “Ce régiment de Chateaufieux était, et méritait d’être, cher à l’armée, à la France. C’est lui qui, le 14 Juillet 1789, campé au Champ-de-Mars, lorsque les Parisiens allèrent prendre des armes aux Invalides, déclara que jamais il ne tirerait sur le peuple. Son refus évidemment paralysa Bésenval, laissa Paris libre et maître de marcher sur la Bastille.” — MICHELET, *Histoire de la Révolution*, ii. 270.

at length they broke out into open revolt, and put their officers under arrest in their own barracks.

The Assembly, perceiving the extreme danger of military insubordination in the unsettled state of the public mind, took the most energetic measures to put down the revolt. Mirabeau exerted his powerful voice on the side of order; and BOUILLÉ, commander of Metz, received orders to march with the military force under his command against the insurgents. No man could be better qualified for the discharge of this delicate but important duty. In addition to the highest personal courage, he possessed the moral determination which is the invariable characteristic of a great mind. Connected with the aristocratic class by birth, and attached to the throne by principle and affection, M. de Bouillé was yet no enemy to those moderate reforms which all intelligent men felt to be indispensable in the state and the army. He was an enemy to the Revolution, not such as it was, but such as it had become. Firm, intrepid, and sagacious, he was better calculated than any other individual to stem the torrent of disaster; but the time was such, that not even the energy of Napoleon could have withstood its fury. Within the sphere of his own command, he maintained inviolate the royal authority: by separating his soldiers from the citizens, he did all that was possible, and that was but little, to preserve them from the contagion of revolutionary principles; while at the same time, by the natural ascendant of a great character, he retained their affections. For long he declined the new military oath, to be faithful "to the nation, to the law, and to the King;" at length, moved by the entreaties of Louis, he agreed to take it, in the hope of preventing the latter part from being entirely forgotten in the first.¹

Never was a more difficult task committed to a general than that now devolved on Bouillé; for he had, with a small band of foreign mercenaries, to suppress a revolt of troops ten times as numerous, composed of native soldiers,

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1790.

52.
Character
of M. de
Bouillé.

¹ Bert. de
Moll. iii.
279, 280.
Toul. i. 119.
Lab. iv. 396.
397.

CHAP.
VI.
— — —
1790.
53.
Great diffi-
culties of de
Bouillé's
situation.
Aug. 24.

supported by the wishes of the whole inhabitants of the provinces in which they were placed. Out of the ninety battalions which he was empowered to collect, he could only reckon on eight or ten, and they were all Swiss or German troops ; and though more than half of the hundred and four squadrons he commanded were faithful, yet they were cantoned, for the sake of forage, in villages at a great distance from each other, and could not be drawn together without exciting suspicion, and probably extending the revolt. The King, as in all other cases, had enjoined force not to be employed except in the last extremity, when it could not by any possibility be avoided.* Nevertheless, immediate steps were necessary, for the revolt at Nancy was daily attracting numbers to the standard of mutiny and plunder. Four French and two Swiss battalions, and some regiments of horse, had already joined it ; four thousand men had flocked in from the vicinity, and were armed by the pillage of the arsenals, which had been broken open ; the military chests had been plundered, every sort of excess perpetrated ; and, by threats of instantly hanging the magistrates in case of refusal, and the general sack of the town, they had succeeded in extorting first 27,000 francs, (£1100), and then 150,000 (£6000), from the municipality ; the immediate spending of which in debauchery had procured for them the unanimous support of the lower orders of the people.¹

¹ Bouillé,
143, 144.
Procès ver-
bal de la
Municipa-
lité de
Nancy, Aug.
14, 1790.
Ibid. 391,
394. Lab.
iv. 396, 397.

54.
Bouillé
marches
against
Nancy.
Aug. 30.

Bouillé's first care was to secure, by small garrisons on whom he could rely, the fortresses of Bitch, Phalsbourg, and Vic ; and at the same time he sent M. de Malseigne to Nancy, armed with the decree of the Assembly, in order to endeavour to prevail on the soldiers to return to their duty, and also to inquire into their alleged grievances. The soldiers and people, however, intoxicated with their success, laughed at his speech, and trampled under foot the decree

* "Sa Majesté désire que la force ne soit employée que lorsque, à l'extrémité, les départemens se trouveront forcés à la requérir."—See LA TOUR DU PIN, *Ministre de la Guerre*, à M. DE BOUILLÉ, 24 Août 1790 ; BOUILLÉ, 112.

of the Assembly, fiercely exclaiming, "Money! money!" The Swiss were particularly loud in this demand; and to such a height did their violence proceed, that it was only by a great exertion of personal strength and courage, and with no small difficulty, that M. de Malseigne escaped death at their hands, and got off to Lunéville, where a regiment of carbineers afforded him protection. Upon hearing of this, M. de Bouillé instantly collected the few troops nearest at hand on whom he could rely, and marched on Nancy at the head of three thousand infantry and fourteen hundred horse. He found the town, which was slightly fortified, occupied by ten thousand regular troops and national guards, with eighteen pieces of cannon; but not intimidated by this great superiority, he forthwith summoned the rebels to leave the town, deliver up their guns, and four ringleaders from each regiment, and submit; threatening them, at the same time, with instant attack in case of refusal. This vigour produced a great impression, as Bouillé's character, at once humane and firm, was well known to the soldiers; a deputation waited on him to state the proposals of the rebels, but their terms were so extravagant and their manners so insolent, that he deemed them wholly inadmissible, and prepared for an immediate attack.¹

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VI.
1790.

¹ Bouillé,
149, 151.
Lab. iv. 402,
403. Deux
Amis, v.
249, 252.

When Bouillé's men approached the gates of Nancy, they were met by a deputation, which promised, on the part of the mutineers, immediate submission; and a convention was entered into, in virtue of which the officers in confinement were liberated, and one of the regiments began to file out of the town. But a quarrel arose between Bouillé's advanced guard and some of the mutineers, who insisted upon having their colours and defending the town, and they turned a gun, loaded with grape, on the entering column. Instantly a noble youth, M. Desilles, an officer in the regiment which had mutinied, but who had remained with it to moderate the excesses of the soldiers, placed himself across the mouth of the cannon, exclaiming,

55.
Bloody
action there,
Aug. 31.

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“ They are your friends,—they are your brothers ; the National Assembly sends them : would you dishonour the regiment of the King ? ” This heroic conduct had no effect on the mutineers ; they dragged him from the mouth of the gun—he returned and clasped it by the touch-hole, upon which he was pierced with bayonets, and the gun discharged. Fifty of Bouillé’s men were struck down by the discharge, and a conflict began. But mutineers, though superior in number, are seldom able to resist the attack of soldiers acting in their duty. Bouillé’s columns penetrated into the town ; the regiment of the King, wavering, retired at the solicitation of its officers to the front of its barracks, and soon capitulated ; and the remainder of the rebels, driven from one street to another, were obliged to surrender, after a resistance which cost them three hundred killed and wounded. The victorious general and troops signalised their triumph by their clemency ; but the inflexible probity of the Swiss government condemned twenty-two of the regiment of Châteaueux to death, and fifty-four to the galleys, which sentence was rigidly executed. Very different was the conduct of the National Assembly. A hundred and eighty of the French mutineers, and three hundred national guards, were taken with arms in their hands ; they were all pardoned by the French legislature, and soon paraded through the streets of Paris in triumph by the Jacobins ; while Bouillé, whose firmness and humanity had shone forth with equal lustre on this trying occasion, became the object of secret terror and open hostility to the whole Revolutionary party.¹

¹ Bouillé, 152, 159. *Moniteur*, Sept. 1, 1790, p. 1009. *Deux Amis*, v. 254, 270. *Lab.* vi. 404, 407. *Bert. de Mol.* iii. 262, 284.

56.
Tumult in Paris, and proceedings in the Assembly.

The rapid and decisive suppression of this revolt excited the utmost sensation among the Jacobins of Paris ; they dreaded, above all things, the demonstration of the ease with which a formidable revolutionary movement could be arrested by the decision of a general, supported by the fidelity of a small body of soldiers. Indefatigable, accordingly, were the efforts they made to excite the public mind on the subject, and, if possible, effect the overthrow of the

ministry which had sanctioned, however remotely, so unwonted and alarming an act of vigour. "It is the despotism of the aristocracy," said Robespierre, "which has made use of the army to provoke a massacre of soldiers whose patriotism was their only fault." The massacre of Nancy, the cruelty of Bouillé, were in every mouth; inflammatory addresses were hawked in every street. Marat, in his journal, thundered out against the government; the victorious general was held up to universal execration. Forty thousand men speedily surrounded the Hall of the Assembly, loudly demanding the dismissal of the ministers and the punishment of La Tour Dupin. But the national guard for once stood firm; the Assembly had too clear a sense of the dangers they had escaped, by the suppression of this revolt, to be diverted from their purpose; and they voted, by a large majority, the thanks of the legislature to M. de Bouillé, the troops of the line, and the national guards, who had been concerned in the suppression of the revolt. Mirabeau even went so far as to propose a decree disbanding the whole existing army, and readmitting into its ranks only such as should take the oath of implicit obedience prepared by the Assembly. But although this proposal was loudly applauded, yet its execution was evaded by an amendment to refer that matter to the committee which was already charged with a report on the internal organisation of the army, and this caused it eventually to fall to the ground.¹

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1790.

Sept. 2.

¹ Marat,
L'Ami du
Peuple, No.
208, 209.
Ferrières,
Mém. ii.
143. Deux
Amis, v.
273. Hist.
Parl. vii.
159, 163.
Prudhom.
Rév. de
Paris, No.
60, p. 381.

This explosion at Nancy was but a manifestation of the general spirit of insubordination which had now penetrated every part of France, and pervaded equally the army, the navy, the towns, and the provinces. A reaction against the Revolution had arisen from its evident tendency to destroy all local jurisdictions and authorities in the provinces: the confiscation of the property of the church had excited profound feelings of indignation among that portion of the people, still a large one in the rural districts, which adhered to the faith of their fathers. The dissolution

57.
Frightful
disorders
in different
parts of
France.

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1790.
April 6. of the bonds of discipline, and the removal of the restraint of authority, had let loose at once the angry, the revengeful, and the selfish passions among the community. At Nismes, a fearful contest took place between the Protestants and Catholics, the former supported by the revolutionists, the latter by the church party ; and the popular magistrates, as usual, did nothing to resist the multitude. The disorders continued through May and June, and were only at last suppressed after fresh numbers of lives had been lost on both sides, the red flag hoisted, and martial law proclaimed.
- Sept. 10. At Brest, the sailors on board the ships of war, indignant at the naval code prepared by the Assembly, which trenched on the license they had arrogated to themselves during the Revolution, broke out into a most alarming mutiny, which was only allayed by the Assembly conceding the principal demands of the insurgents. An insurrection at Toulon led to the same result : at Toulouse, a frightful civil war was only arrested by the firmness of the magistrates, who there did their duty : at Marseilles, a ferocious mob fell on an officer named de Beausset, who was labouring to discharge his duty, cut off his head, and tore his body in pieces, which were divided among his assassins : at Montauban, six men were killed, and forty-five wounded ; the heads of the dead were paraded on pikes, the wounded dragged, bleeding as they were, in triumph through the streets : at Angers, eight men were killed, and forty-five wounded, during a tumult occasioned by the high prices of provisions. It is painful to dwell further on such atrocities ; they are to be met with, alas ! in too many pages of history ; but at this time, the peculiar disgrace attached to the revolutionary government and authorities, that scarce any of the guilty parties were either inquired after or brought to punishment. The only persons really endangered were those who bravely discharged their duty.¹

¹ Lab. iv. 427, 428.
Prudhom.
Crimes de la Rév. i. 207, 259.

But all these disorders were thrown into the shade by those which arose from the oppression which the Assem-

bly soon after exercised on the church. On 27th November 1790, an iniquitous decree was passed by this body, ordering that the same oath should be tendered to the ecclesiastics which had been prescribed for the military—viz. “To be faithful to the nation, the law, and the King ;” with this addition, “and to maintain, with all their power, the constitution decreed by the National Assembly, and accepted by the King.” In case of refusal, it was enacted, that they should be held to have renounced their benefices, which were immediately to be filled up in the mode prescribed by the civil constitution of the church. Eight days only were allowed to the resident, and two months to the absent clergy, to testify their adherence. A large part of the bishops and curés in the Assembly refused the oath, and their example was followed by the great majority of the clergy throughout France—a memorable example of conscientious discharge of duty, which might have opened the eyes of the Assembly to the impolicy, as well as injustice, of carrying on any further persecution against this important class. Such, however, was the spirit of the times, that their refusal was universally ascribed to the most factious motives, and immediately followed by the confiscation of their livings. The faithful clergy, threatened by this cruel measure with destitution, filled the kingdom with their complaints, and excited, in those districts where their influence still remained, the strongest commiseration at their approaching fate. These feelings were greatly aggravated when the parochial incumbents were actually expelled from their livings. The people beheld with indignation new churchmen filling the vacant pulpits, and administering, with unconsecrated hands, the holiest offices of religion. The dispossessed clergy still lingered in their dioceses or livings, subsisting on the charity of their former flocks, and denouncing as impious the ordinances and proceedings of the intrusive ministers.¹ Inflamed with resentment at their proceedings, the Assembly at length fixed a day for the adherence of all the

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1790.

58.

New ecclesi-
astical oath.
Its disas-
trous effects.
Nov. 27.Jan. 4, 1791.
¹ Hist. Parl.
vii. 141, 142,
362. Toul.
i. 258, 259,
261. Mig.
i. 121, 122.
Th. i. 266.

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clergy in France, and upon its expiry the decree of forfeiture was universally and rigorously enforced. Mirabeau in vain raised his voice against this tyrannical step ; the dictates of justice, the feelings of humanity, even the attachments of the rural population, were alike drowned by the clamours of the populace in the larger towns.

59.
Reasons
which led
them to
resist this
oath.

July 10,
1790.

¹ Flossan,
Hist. Dip.
de Franc. vii.
489. Abbé
Georg. 39,
41. Savines
Exam. de
la Const.
Civile du
Clergé, 169.
Lab. v. 33.

In this extremity, and when the adherence of the ecclesiastics to the oath, or the sacrifice of their benefices, was unavoidable, the clergy, dignified and ordinary, of France, evinced a disinterested spirit and grandeur of character worthy of the illustrious church to which they belonged, and which almost make us forget the previous corruptions which had been instrumental in producing the Revolution. The Pope had expressly refused his sanction to the civil constitution of the clergy, as established by the Assembly, and written to two of the bishops to that effect. In addition to this, a consistory had been held of the whole bishops in France, by whom it was, by a large majority, agreed—one archbishop and four bishops only dissenting,*—that they would not take the oath to be faithful to the constitution, as it vested the whole nomination of priests and bishops in a simple numerical majority of their several parishes or dioceses, to the entire exclusion of the appointment or control of the church. It had become, therefore, a matter of conscience with the clergy to refuse the oath.¹

60.
Remarkable
speech and
prophecy of
Cazalès on
this occa-
sion.
Jan. 28,
1791.

Cazalès, in this contest, animated by the greatness of the cause he was defending, rose to the highest pitch of eloquence, and pronounced a speech which proved to be prophetic. “The clergy, in conformity with the principles of their religion, are compelled to refuse the oath. You may expel them from their benefices ; but will that destroy their influence over their flocks ? Do you doubt that the bishops, driven from their stations, will excommunicate those who are put in their place ? Do you doubt that a

* Talleyrand, the Bishops of Lidda, Orleans, and Vivier, and the Archbishop of Aix.

large part of the faithful will remain attached to their ancient pastors, to the eternal principles of the church? There is a schism introduced, the quarrels of religion commence: the people will come to doubt the validity of the sacraments; they will fear to see disappear from the land that sublime religion which, receiving man in the cradle, and following him to the grave, can alone offer him consolations amidst the vicissitudes of life. Thus will commence the division of the people, the multiplication of the victims of the Revolution. You will see the Catholics, over the whole country, following their beloved pastors amidst forests and caverns: you will see them reduced to the misery and desolation which the Protestant clergy experienced on the revocation of the edict of Nantes. Is that a result to be desired of a Revolution which proclaimed peace on earth, good-will towards men? Driven from their episcopal palaces, the bishops will retire to the huts of the cottagers who have sheltered them in their distress. Take from them their golden crosses, and they will find others of wood; and it was by a cross of wood that the world was saved.”¹

¹ Moniteur, Jan. 28, p. 113; and Lab. v. 53.

When the fatal day arrived, fixed for the final taking of the oath by the bishops and dignified clergy in the Assembly, a furious multitude surrounded the hall, exclaiming, “To the *lanterne!* to the *lanterne* with all who refuse!” The Abbé Maury raised his powerful voice in the last extremity, but he was interrupted by incessant cries. “Strike; but hear me!” exclaimed the intrepid champion of the church; but it was all in vain. “Swear! swear!” resounded on all sides; and the gray-haired heads of the French church came forth. The Bishop of Agen was the first called: he had never before spoken in the Assembly, and it was with great difficulty he could obtain a hearing. “Swear or refuse!” was the universal cry of the galleries. “I feel no regret,” said he “at the loss of my preferment; I feel no regret for the loss of my fortune: but I should feel regret, indeed, if I

61.
Noble conduct of the clergy in refusing the oath, Jan 4.

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1791.

lost your esteem : believe me, then, I cannot take the oath." M. Fournes was next called. "I glory," said he, "in following my bishop, as St Lawrence did his pastor." Le Clerc was the third named. "I am a member," said he, "of the Apostolic church." "Swear or refuse!" said Rœderer, in a voice almost hoarse with fury. "This is tyranny indeed!" exclaimed Foucault; "the emperors who persecuted the Christian martyrs allowed them to pronounce the name of God, and testify, in dying, their faith in their religion." The Bishop of Poitiers then presented himself. "I am seventy years old," said he; "I have passed thirty-five years in my bishopric; I will not dishonour my old age; I cannot take an oath against my conscience." "Say yes or no." "I prefer, then, living in poverty, and will accept my lot in the spirit of penitence." Only one curé, named Landrin, took the oath; even the hundred and eighteen who had first given victory to the Tiers Etat, by joining their ranks, held back. At length the President said—"For the last time I call on the bishops and ecclesiastical functionaries to come forward, and take the oath, in terms of the decree." A quarter of an hour of dead silence ensued, during which no one appeared, and the meeting adjourned. Such was the last public act of the church of France, and never certainly did it more worthily evince the divine spirit of its faith.¹

¹ Hist. Parl. viii. 354, 362; and *Moniteur*, Jan. v. 1791.

62.
Ruinous
effects of
this mea-
sure.

From these measures may be traced the violent animosity of the French church against the Revolution, and to this cause ascribed the irreligious spirit which in so remarkable a manner characterised its progress. The clergy being the first class who suffered under the violence of popular spoliation, were the first to raise their voice against its proceedings, and to rouse a portion of the nation to resist its progress; hence the contending parties began to mingle religious rancour with civil dissension. In the cities, in the departments, the people were divided between the refractory and the revolutionary clergy; the faithful deemed none of the exercises of religion duly per-

formed but by the dispossessed ministers ; the democrats looked upon these nonjuring ecclesiastics as fanatics, alike inaccessible to reason and dangerous to society. The clergy who refused the oath composed the most respectable part of this body, as might have been expected from men who relinquished rank and fortune for the sake of conscience. Those who accepted it were in part demagogues, whose principles readily succumbed to their ambition. The former influenced a large portion of the community, especially in the remote and rural districts ; the latter were followed by the most influential part of the inhabitants, the young, the active, the ambitious. In this way the Revolution split the kingdom into two parties, who have never ceased to be strongly exasperated against each other : the one, those who adhered to the religious observances of their fathers ; the other, those who opposed them. The latter have proved victorious in the strife, at least in France itself ; and the consequence has been, that irreligion has since prevailed for a long period, especially in the towns, in France to an extent unparalleled in any Christian state.¹

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1791.

¹ Toul. 262.
Mig. i. 122.

This iniquitous measure was speedily followed by another, equally alluring in appearance, and attended in the end by consequences to public freedom fully as disastrous—the abolition of the privilege of primogeniture, and establishment of the right of equal succession to landed property to the nearest of kin, whether in the descending, ascending, or collateral line, without any regard either to the distinction of the sexes, or of the full and the half blood.* This prodigious change, which laid the axe to the root of the aristocracy, and indeed of the whole class of considerable landed proprietors in the kingdom, by providing for the division of their estates on their decease among all their relations in an equal degree of consan-

63.
Revolution-
ary law of
inheritance.
March 18.

* See chap. xxxv. § 91 *et seq.*, where a full account is given of the Law of Succession introduced on this occasion, and subsequently adopted in the Code Napoleon.

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VI.

1791.

In 1802.

¹ Hist. Parl.
ix. 137, 194.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 150.

64.
Clubs of
Paris. Ja-
cobins and
Monarch-
iens.

guinity, was at the moment so agreeable to the levelling spirit of the times that it met with very little opposition, and proved so acceptable to the revolutionary party throughout the kingdom that it survived all the other changes of the government, and remains the common law of inheritance in France at this hour. Napoleon was compelled to adopt it, under a slight modification, into the code which bears his name ; and though fully aware of its dangerous tendency in extinguishing the aristocratic class, who were the only permanent supporters of the throne, or the cause of order, he never felt himself strong enough to propose its repeal. Other changes introduced by the French Revolution have produced consequences more immediately disastrous, none so ultimately fatal to the cause of freedom. It provided for the slow but certain extinction of that grand and characteristic feature of European civilisation, a hereditary and independent body of landed proprietors ; removed the barrier which alone has been proved by experience to be permanently adequate to resist the ambition of the commons, or the tyranny of the crown ; and left the nation no elements but the burghers in the towns, and the poor and helpless peasants in the country, to withstand the encroachments of the central power in the capital, armed, by the shortsighted ambition of the popular party, with almost all the powers in the state.¹

About the same period, the clubs of Paris began to assume that formidable influence which they subsequently exercised in the Revolution. They consisted merely of voluntary associations of individuals who met to discuss public affairs ; but, from the number and talent of their members, they soon became of great importance. The most powerful of these was the famous Club of the JACOBIENS, which, after the translation of the Assembly to Paris, rapidly extended its ramifications through the provinces, and by the admission of every citizen, indiscriminately, became the great focus of revolutionary prin-

ciples. The moderate party, to counterbalance its influence, established a new club, entitled the Club of 1789, at the head of which were Sièyes, Chapelier, Lafayette, and La Rochefoucauld. The latter at first prevailed in the Assembly; the former was the favourite of the people. But as the tendency of all public convulsions is to run into extremes, from the incessant efforts of the lower classes to dispossess their superiors, and of the latter to recover their authority, the moderate club soon fell into obscurity; while the Jacobins went on, increasing in number and energy, until at length it overturned the government, and sent forth the sanguinary despots who established the Reign of Terror. The Royalists in vain endeavoured to establish clubs as a counterpoise to these assemblies. Their influence was too inconsiderable, their numbers too small, to keep alive the flame; the leaders of their party had gone into exile—those who remained laboured under the depression incident to a declining cause. A club entitled *Le Monarchique* had some success at its first opening; but its numbers gradually fell off, and it at length was closed by the municipal authority, under pretence of putting an end to the seditious assemblages which it occasioned among the people. Even during its continuance it was mainly supported by money from the court, to which it cost enormous sums. Mirabeau incessantly recommended the distribution of money as the only mode of checking the Revolution.^{1*}

The increasing emigration of the noblesse augmented the distrust and suspicions of the nation. It was openly announced at the Jacobin club that the King was about to fly from Paris. The departure of the Princesses Adelaide and Victoria, aunts of the King, who had set out for Rome, gave rise to a rumour that the whole royal family were about to depart; and to such a height did

¹ Hist. Parl. ix. 118, 122. Deux Amis, iv. 271, 278. Mig. i. 123. De la Marcke, 176.

65.
Departure for Rome of the Princesses Adelaide and Victoria. April 18.

* Les moyens que Mirabeau voulait employer étaient de l'argent, toujours de l'argent. Je voulais qu'on le repandit à grandes masses et sur plusieurs points." DE LA MARCKE, i. 175.

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VI.

1791.

the public anxiety rise, that the mob forcibly prevented a visit to St Cloud, which the King, whose health was now seriously impaired by his long confinement in the Tuileries, was desirous to make. Lafayette, who wished to prove the personal liberty of the monarch, endeavoured in vain to prevail on his guards to allow him to depart ; his orders were disobeyed by his own troops, and openly derided by the assembled multitude: "Hold your tongue!" they exclaimed, "the King shall not go." The popularity of this once adored leader was already gone, in consequence of a vigorous and successful attack which he had made, on the 28th February, on a body of rioters who had issued from the Faubourg St-Antoine, and were beginning to demolish the castle of Vincennes. Disgusted at his want of success with the troops, he resigned the command of the national guard, and was only prevailed on to resume it by the earnest entreaties of the whole regiments of Paris. The Assembly, alarmed at the possibility of the King's escaping, passed a decree, declaring that the person of the King was inviolable ; that the constitutional regent should be the nearest male heir of the crown ; and that the flight of the monarch should be equivalent to his dethronement.¹

¹ Campan, ii. 117, 118, Deux Amis, vi. 22, 24. Hist. Parl. ix. 118, 411, 414.

66.
Continued
emigration.

The emigration of the nobility, however, meanwhile continued with unabated violence. The heads of the first families in France repaired to Coblenz, where a large body of emigrants was assembled ; no disguise was attempted of their destination ; several young noblemen, on leaving the opera, ordered their coachmen to drive to that city. The fever of departure became so general, that the roads leading to the Rhine were crowded with elegant equipages, conveying away those who had hitherto remained of the noble families of France. They did not, as in the time of the Crusades, sell their estates, but abandoned them to the first occupant, trusting soon to regain them by the sword. Vain hope ! The Assembly confiscated their properties ; the republican armies van-

quished their battalions ; and the nobility of France for ever lost their inheritances. Vain, frivolous, and self-sufficient, the aristocracy at Coblenz had not laid aside their character when they left their country ; their vices were at least as conspicuous in exile as their misfortunes ; and, declining to avail themselves of the only aid which could have retrieved their fortunes, they refused all offers of assistance from the middle ranks of society. They were estimable only from the generosity with which they adhered in its misfortunes to the throne, even when occupied by a monarch who had done more than any of his predecessors to humble it in the dust. But they had not the capacity requisite for an efficient struggle. The Prince of Condé alone, at the head of a brave band, stationed himself on the Upper Rhine, strangers to the intrigues that were going on, but determined to regain their rights by the sword.¹ *

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VI.
1791.

¹ Deux
Amis, vi. 3,
7. Th. i.
270, 271.
Lac. viii.
117.

This general defection, which was magnified in the revolutionary journals, produced so great an impression, that the two royal princesses were arrested on their journey towards Switzerland, and the Assembly felt the utmost difficulty at allowing them to proceed. Mirabeau,

67.
Arrest of
the royal
princesses.

* The best defence of the emigrants that has ever been made, is that by Chateaubriand in his memoirs :—"A worthy foreigner by his fireside, in a tranquil state, sure of rising in the morning as safe as he went to bed in the evening, in secure possession of his fortune, with his door well barred, surrounded by friends within and without, will find it no difficult matter to prove, while he drinks a good glass of wine, that the French emigrants were in the wrong, and that an upright citizen should in no extremity desert his country. It is not surprising that he arrives at such a conclusion. He is at ease—no one thinks of persecuting him : he is in no danger of being insulted, murdered, or burned in his house, because his ancestor was noble—his conclusions are easily formed. It belongs only to misfortune to judge of misfortune ; the hardened heart of prosperity cannot enter into the delicate feelings of adversity. If we consider calmly what the emigrants have suffered in France, where is the man now at his ease who can lay his hand on his heart and say, 'I would not have acted as they did?' The persecution commenced everywhere at the same time in all its parts, and it is a mistake to suppose that difference of political opinion alone was its cause. Were you the warmest democrat, the most burning patriot, it was enough that you bore a historic name to subject you to the risk of being prosecuted, burned, or hanged, as is proved by the example of Lameth and many others, whose properties were laid waste, notwithstanding their ardour in defence of the

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who was now secretly inclined to the royal party, raised his powerful voice to facilitate their departure. "An imperious law," exclaimed the Jacobins, "forbids their departure."—"What law?" said Mirabeau. "The safety of the people!" replied Lameth.—"The safety of the people!" rejoined Mirabeau; "as if two princesses advanced in years, tormented by the fears of their consciences, would compromise it by their absence or their opposition! The safety of the people! I expected to have heard these words invoked for serious dangers: since you act as tyrants in the name of freedom, who will hereafter trust your assurance?"—"Europe will be surprised to learn," said the Baron de Menou, "that the Assembly has been occupied during two hours with the journey of two old ladies, who prefer hearing the mass at Rome to doing so at Paris." The ridicule of the thing at length prevailed over the fears of the democrats, and the two princesses were allowed to continue their journey without further interruption.¹

These discussions were but the prelude to the great

people in the Constituent Assembly."—See CHATEAUBRIAND'S *Memoirs—Fragments*, p. 78.

Admitting the caustic eloquence of these remarks, the British historian cannot allow their justice. The example of the nobility of his own country, in the disastrous days which succeeded the passing of the Reform Bill, has furnished him with a decisive refutation of them. The flames of Bristol and Nottingham proved that danger had reached their dwellings as well as those of the French noblesse; and if they had in consequence deserted their country, and leagued with the stranger, it is hardly doubtful that similar excesses would have laid waste the whole fair realm of England. They did not do so: they remained at home, braving every danger, enduring every insult; and who can over-estimate the influence of such moral courage in mitigating the evils which then so evidently threatened their country? The general massacres in France did not begin till after the 10th August 1792; and yet the whole nobility had emigrated, and were assembled in menacing crowds at Coblenz, before the end of 1791. Previous to this there had, indeed, been a vast catalogue of frightful rural disorders, immediately consequent on the abandonment of the feudal rights in August 1789; but these excesses had been of short duration, and the two last years of the Constituent Assembly had been comparatively calm and tranquil. Their emigration was excusable in the autumn of 1789; it was no longer so in the autumn of 1791; and the frightful exasperation of parties which followed, may in a great measure be traced to that culpable desertion of their first patriotic duties, and unhappy union with foreign armies for the invasion of their country.

¹ Deux
Amis, vi.
7, 10. Hist.
Parl. ix. 41,
44. Lac. viii.
122. Th. i.
272.

question of the law against the emigrants, which now occupied the attention, not only of the Assembly, but of all the clubs in France. The project of the law introduced by Chapelier, it is said with the humane design of preventing its adoption, was marked by undisguised severity. It authorised a committee of three persons to pronounce upon refractory emigrants the sentence of outlawry and confiscation. A general horror pervaded the Assembly at the cruel proposal, and Mirabeau, taking a skilful advantage of the first impression, succeeded in preventing its adoption. Never was his eloquence more powerful, or his influence more strongly displayed, than on that occasion, the last on which he ever addressed that body. "The sensation which the project of this law has excited," said he, "proves that it is worthy of a place in the code of Draco, and that it should never be received into the decrees of the National Assembly of France. It is high time you should be undeceived; if you or your successors should ever give way to the violent counsels by which you are now beset, the law which you now spurn will come to be regarded as an act of clemency. In the bloody pages of your statute-book, the word DEATH will every where be found; your mouths will never cease to pronounce that terrible word; your statutes, while they spread dismay within the kingdom, will chase to foreign shores all who give lustre to the name of France; and your execrable enactments will find subjects for execution only among the poor, the aged, and the unfortunate. For my own part, far from subscribing to such atrocious measures, I should conceive myself absolved from every oath of fidelity to those who could carry their infamy so far as to name such a dictatorial commission. Your murmurs are unavailing: to please you is my happiness; to warn you, my duty: the popularity which I desire is not a feeble twig, fanned by the breath of momentary favour;¹ it is an oak, whose roots are spread in the soil—that is to say, fixed on the immutable basis of justice and

CHAP.
VI.

1791.

68.
Discussions
concerning
emigrants.
March 1.

¹ Hist. Parl.
ix. 48, 62.
Moniteur,
March 1.
Lac. viii.
122, 126.
Mig. i. 125.
Th. i. 277,
279.

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VI.

1791.

69.
Mirabeau
joins the
throne.

liberty. I understand the vexation of those, who, now so ardent, or rather so perfidious, in their love of freedom, would be puzzled to tell when it arose in their bosoms." These last words excited a violent murmur among the Jacobins. "Silence those thirty voices!" said Mirabeau in a voice of thunder, and the hall was instantly silent.

With such prophetic truth did this able man foresee the result of the violent counsels, and angry passions, which were now beginning to characterise the career of the Revolution. He plainly perceived that his popularity was on the wane, not because his eloquence was less powerful, his arguments less cogent, his energy less commanding, than when he reigned the lord of the ascendant, but because he no longer headed the popular movement, and now strove to master the passions he had excited among the people. The failure of the Duke of Orleans to take advantage of the revolt of 6th October, had entirely alienated him from that pusillanimous leader, and he sighed for the offices and favour of the court. Already the cry had become common in the streets, "*Grande trahison du Comte Mirabeau*," and the populace followed the career of less able but more reckless leaders. Disgusted with the fickleness of the multitude, and foreseeing the sanguinary excesses to which they were fast approaching, he had, since the beginning of February, made secret advances to the constitutional party, and entered into correspondence with the King, for the purpose of restraining the further progress of the Revolution.* He received for a short time a pension of 20,000 francs, or £800 a-month, first from the Comte D'Artois, and afterwards from the King; but it was not continued till the time of his death, from its being found that he was not so pliant as the court party expected.

* In the beginning of February he opened these communications by the following note to M. Malouet, one of the King's ministers:—"Je suis plus de votre avis que vous ne pensez: et quelle que soit votre opinion sur mon compte, la mienne n'a jamais varié sur vous. Il est temps que les gens sensés s'approchent et s'entendent. Auriez-vous de la répugnance à vous trouver avec moi chez un de vos amis, M. de Montmorin? Indiquez-moi le jour, pourvu que ce soit après une séance du soir."—BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, iv. 174.

Before that time, however, he had received bills signed by the King for 2,500,000 francs (£100,000), a sum fully equal to double the amount in this country.* He was even honoured with a private interview with the Queen in the gardens of St Cloud, who was with reason most anxious to secure his great abilities in defence of the throne.† Her fascinating manner secured his unsteady affections, while the royal bounty provided the supplies for his extravagance. His style of life suddenly changed; magnificent entertainments succeeded each other in endless profusion, and his house resembled rather the hotel of a powerful minister, than that of the leader of a fierce democracy. Yet mere venality was not the motive for this great change: he allied himself to the court, partly because he saw it was the only way to stop the progress of the Revolution; he took their pensions, because he regarded himself as their minister to govern the Assembly, and he would have rejected with disdain any proposition to undertake what was unworthy of his character. His design was to support the throne, and consolidate the constitution, by putting a stop to the encroachments of the people. With this view, he proposed to establish, in reality and not in name, the royal authority; to dissolve the Assembly, and reassemble a new one; restore the nobility, and form a constitution as nearly as possible on the English model—a wise and generous object, entertained at different times by all the best friends of freedom in France,¹ but which none were able to accomplish,

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¹ Campan, ii. 127.
Weber, ii. 37.
Du-
mont, Souv.
de Mira-
beau, 285,
312, 313.
Bouillé,
247. Lac.
viii. 123.
Mig. i. 126.

* *Mem. de MALLET DU PAN*, i. 229. Mirabeau wrote to the King on the 10th May 1790:—"Je vois clairement que nous sommes dans l'anarchie, et que nous nous enfonçons tous les jours davantage. Je suis indigné de l'idée que je n'aurais contribué qu'à une vaste démolition, et la crainte de voir un autre chef à l'état que le Roi est si insupportable que je me sens impérieusement rappelé aux affaires dans un moment où je croyais n'aspirer qu'à la retraite."—*DE LA MARCK*, ii. 11.

† So charmed was Mirabeau with the Queen's manner, that he took leave of her with these words,—“Madame, lorsque votre auguste mère admettait un de ses sujets à l'honneur d'une entretien, jamais elle ne le congédiait sans lui donner sa main à baiser.” La Reine présenta la sienne. Mirabeau s'inclina: puis, relevant la tête, il dit avec un accent plein d'âme et de fierté,—“Madame, la monarchie est sauvée.”—*CAMPAN*, ii. 127; and *WEBER*, ii. 37.

CHAP. VI. from the flight of the great and powerful body by whom
it should have been supported.

1791. The plan of Mirabeau was to facilitate the escape of
70. the King from Paris to Compiègne, or Fontainebleau ;
His plan on its behalf. that he should there place himself under the guidance of
the able and intrepid M. de Bouillé, assemble a royal
army, call to his support the remaining friends of order,
and openly employ force to stem the torrent.* He pledged
himself for the immediate support of thirty departments,
and the ultimate adhesion of thirty-six more. Between
the contending parties, he flattered himself he should be
able to act as mediator, and restore the monarchy to the
consideration it had lost, by founding it on the basis of
constitutional freedom. "I would not wish," said he, in
a letter to the King, "to be always employed in the vast
work of destruction ;" and, in truth, his ambition was now
to repair the havoc which he himself had made in the
social system. He was strongly impressed with the idea,
which was in all probability well founded, that if the King
could be brought to put himself at the head of the con-
stitutional party, and resist the further progress of demo-
cracy, the country might yet be saved. "You know not,"
said he, "to what a degree France is still attached to the
King, and that its ideas are still essentially monarchical.
The moment the King recovers his freedom, the Assembly
will be reduced to nothing : it is a colossus with the aid
of his name : without it, it would be a mountain of sand.
There will be some movements at the Palais Royal, and
that will be all. Should Lafayette attempt to play the
part of Washington, at the head of the national guard,

* "Le plan de contre-révolution de M. Mirabeau était dirigé dans un mé-
moire qui existe encore chez M. de Montmorin, et où l'Assemblée Constituante
était traitée avec horreur et avec mépris le plus profond. Mirabeau entendait
monter,—1. Une machine de corruption dans les tribunes, les sections, les
clubs. 2. Une machine d'écrits. 3. Des inspecteurs des cadastres qu'il eut
envoyés dans les départements sous prétexte de vivifier les rôles d'impositions,
et qu'il eut employés à semer ces écrits. 4. Provoquer les adresses des
départements au Roi, pour demander la dissolution de l'Assemblée et un nou-
veau corps législatif. 5. Il jurait soutenir ces adresses par M. de Bouillé et
son armée."—MALLET DU PAN, i. 229.

he will speedily, and deservedly, perish." He relied upon the influence of the clergy, who were now openly committed against the Revolution, with the rural population, and on the energy and intrepidity of the Queen, as sufficient to counterbalance all the consequences of the vacillation of the King. But, in the midst of these magnificent designs, he was cut off by death. A constitution naturally strong sank under the accumulated pressure of ambition, excitement, and excessive indulgence.¹

His death, albeit that of a sceptic, had something in it sublime. He was no stranger to his approaching dissolution ; but, far from being intimidated by the prospect, he gloried in the name he was to leave. Hearing the cannon discharge upon some public event, he exclaimed, " I already hear the funeral obsequies of Achilles—after my death, the factions will tear to shreds the remnants of the monarchy." His sufferings were severe at the close of his illness : at one period, when the power of speech was gone, he wrote on a slip of paper the words of Hamlet, "To die is to sleep." "When a sick man is given over, and he suffers frightful pains, can a friendly physician refuse to give him opium?" "My pains are insupportable ; I have an age of strength, but not an instant of courage." A few hours before his death, the commencement of mortification relieved his sufferings. "Remove from the bed," said he, "all that sad apparatus. Instead of these useless precautions, surround me with the perfumes and the flowers of spring ; dress my hair with care : let me fall asleep amidst the sound of harmonious music." He then spoke for ten minutes with such vivid and touching eloquence, that every one in the room was melted into tears. "When I am no more," said he, "my worth will become known. The misfortunes which I have held back will then pour on all sides upon France ; the criminal faction which now trembles before me will be unbridled. I have before my eyes unbounded presentiments of disaster. We now

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¹ Lac. viii.
127, 128.
Stael, i. 405,
406. Th. i.
280. Dum.
207, 210,
211, 257.
Weber, ii.
53.

71.
His death.
April 2.

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¹ *Chronique de Paris*, 3d and 4th April.
Hist. Parl. ix, 335, 339.
De Staël, i. 403. *Lac.* viii. 133.
Dumont, 267, 268.

72.
His character.

see how much we erred in not preventing the commons from assuming the name of the National Assembly ; since they gained that victory, they have never ceased to show themselves unworthy of it. They have chosen to govern the King, instead of governing by him ; but soon neither he nor they will rule the country, but a vile faction, which will overspread it with horrors." A spasm, attended with violent convulsions, having returned, he again asked for laudanum. "When nature," said he, "has abandoned an unhappy victim, when a miracle only could save his life, how can you have the barbarity to let him expire on the wheel ?" His feet were already cold, but his countenance still retained its animation, his eye its wonted fire, as if death spared to the last the abode of so much genius. Feigning to comply, they gave him a cup, containing what they assured him was laudanum. He calmly drank it off, fell back on his pillow, and expired.¹

Such was the end of Mirabeau, the first master-spirit who arose amidst the troubles of the Revolution. He was upwards of forty years of age when he entered public life ; but his reputation was already great at the opening of the States-general, and he was looked to as the tribune who was to support the cause of the people against the violence of the crown. Endowed with splendid talents, but impelled by insatiable ambition ; gifted with a clear intellect, but the prey of inordinate passions ; sagacious in the perception of truth, but indifferent as to the means by which distinction was to be acquired ; without great information derived from study, but with an unrivalled power of turning what he possessed to the best account ; bold in design, but reckless of purpose—he affords a memorable example of the inefficacy of mere intellectual power and resolution to supply the want of moral, or to compensate the absence of religious feeling. He was too impetuous to make himself master of any subject ; studied nothing profoundly, and owed almost all the writings to which his name was attached, and many of the speeches

which he delivered, to Dumont and Duroverai, who aided him in his herculean labours. His chief talent consisted in a strong and ardent imagination, a nervous elocution, and an unrivalled power of discerning at once the spirit of the assembly which he was addressing, and applying the whole force of his mind to the point from which the resistance proceeded. Great as his influence was in the Assembly, it was less than it would have been, but for the consequences of his irregular life ; and the general belief entertained of his want of principle made the league with the court, in the close of his career, be ascribed to venal, when it was rather owing to patriotic motives. His inordinate passions cut him short in the most splendid period of his career—in the vigour of his talents, and the zenith of his power, when he was about to undertake the glorious task of healing the wounds and curbing the violence of the Revolution. His primary object was to acquire distinction : he espoused at first the popular side, because it offered the fairest chance of gaining celebrity ; he was prepared at last to leave it, when he found the gales of popular favour inclining to others more sanguinary and less enlightened than himself.¹

His death was felt by all as a public calamity : by the people, because he had been the early leader and intrepid champion of freedom ; by the royalists, because they trusted to his support against the violence of the democratic party. All Paris assembled at his funeral obsequies, which were celebrated with extraordinary pomp by torchlight, amidst the tears of innumerable spectators. Twenty thousand national guards, and delegates from all the sections of Paris, accompanied the corpse to the Pantheon, where it was placed by the remains of Descartes. The coffin was borne by the grenadiers of the battalion of La Grange-Batelière, which he commanded : deputations from the sixty battalions of the national guard of Paris, with Lafayette at their head, joined in the procession.² The church of St Geneviève was hung with

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¹ De Stael, i. 186, 259.
Th. i. 123,
124, 125.
Dum. 276,
277.

73.
And funeral
obsequies.
April 4.

² Hist. Parl. x. 369, 390.
Deux Amis, vi. 49, 51.
Th. i. 262.
Lac. viii. 135. De Stael, i. 408.

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black, and the body lowered into the grave at midnight amidst volleys of musketry. The bones of Voltaire, and subsequently those of Rousseau, were soon after removed to the same cemetery ; over the noble portico of which were inscribed the words—" Aux Grandes Ames la Patrie Reconnoissante."

74.
Changed
views of
the literary
men in Paris
on the Re-
volution.

The literary and philosophical characters in Paris, who had done so much to urge on the tempest of democracy, were now fully sensible of the ungovernable nature of the power which they had excited. Volney, long one of Mirabeau's intimate friends, openly expressed, in his caustic way, his sense of the thralldom which the Assembly had imposed on itself. " Can you pretend," said he, " to command silence to the galleries ? Our masters sit there ; it is but reasonable they should applaud or censure their servants' speeches." " I am astonished to hear you," said one of the bystanders to the Abbé Sabatier, who had first originated the cry for the States-general, " rail so violently at an assembly which you had so powerful a hand in calling into existence."—" Yes," replied the abbé, " but they have changed my States-general at nurse." " The States-general," said Marmontel, " always remind me of an expression of Madame de Sevigné—' I would admire Provence if I had never seen the Provençaux.'"¹

¹ Dumont,
250, 252.
Ségur, iii.
384.

75.
Debate in
the Assem-
bly on the
punishment
of death,
and Robes-
pierre's
speech on it.
May.30.

Philanthropic ideas meanwhile formed the ruling principles of the ruling party in France. On the 30th May a motion was brought forward in the Assembly by Lepelletier St Fargeau, for the entire abolition of the punishment of death. It proceeded on the report of a committee to whom the matter had been referred, which bore, " That punishments should be humane, justly accommodated in gradation to crime, equal towards all citizens, exempt from all judicial power ; repressive chiefly by their prolonged nature and privations ; public, and carried into execution near the places of the crime ; that they should improve the mind of the convict by the habit of labour, and decline in severity as the period of their termination

approached." Few probably will dispute that these are the proper principles of criminal jurisprudence ; the difficulty is to render them effectual in repressing crime. But what renders this debate chiefly remarkable, is the strong opinion expressed by Robespierre in the course of it *against the punishment of death*. "The news," said he, "having been brought to Athens that some citizens at Argos had been condemned to death, the people ran to the temple, and prayed the gods to turn aside the Argives from such cruel and fatal thoughts. I am about to pray, not the gods, but the legislators, who should be the interpreters of the eternal laws which the Deity has imprinted in the human heart, to efface from the code of the French *those laws of blood which command judicial murders*, and which our feelings and the new constitution alike repel. I undertake to prove that the punishment of death is essentially unjust ; that it has no tendency to repress crimes ; and that it multiplies offences much more than it diminishes them.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
x. 55, 67.

"Before society is formed and the force of law established, if I am attacked by an assassin or a robber, I must kill him, or I will be killed myself. But in civilised society, when the power of all is concentrated against one alone, what principle either of justice or necessity can authorise the punishment of death ? A conqueror who kills his prisoners in cold blood is justly stigmatised as a barbarian. A grown man who murders a child, whom he can disarm and punish, appears a monster. An accused person, whom law has condemned, is neither more nor less than a vanquished and powerless enemy ; he is more at your mercy than a child before a grown man. In the eyes of truth and justice, therefore, those death-scenes which are got up with so much solemnity are nothing but base assassinations, solemn crimes, committed not by individuals, but by entire nations, and of which every individual must bear the responsibility.

"The punishment of death is necessary, say the par-

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tisans of ancient barbarity ; without it, there can be no adequate security against crime. Have those who say so duly estimated the springs which really move the human heart ? Is death the most terrible of all things ? Alas ! to how many things does the catalogue of human woes tell you it is a relief ? The love of life yields to pride, the most injurious of all the passions which sway the human heart. It is often sought after as a cessation from pain by the lover, the bankrupt, the drunkard. The punishment which is really overwhelming is opprobrium : the general expression of public execration. No one seeks *it* as a refuge from the ills of life. When the legislator can strike the guilty in so many ways—merciful yet terrible, bloodless yet efficacious—why should he ever recur to the hazard of a public execution ? The legislature which prefers death to the milder chastisements within its power, outrages public feeling and brutalises the minds of the people. Such a legislator resembles the cruel preceptor who, by the frequent use of savage punishments, degrades and hardens the mind of his pupil. The judgments of human tribunals are never sufficiently certain of being based on justice to warrant the inflicting of a punishment which can never be recalled.” The Assembly, however, was not carried away by this eloquent reasoning, but decreed that the punishment of death should be preserved, but should be inflicted only by beheading without any previous torture.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
x. 55, 69.

76.
Designs of
the royal
family to
effect their
escape.

The death of Mirabeau did not arrest the plans which he had formed for the escape of the King. His state of thralldom was too obvious to be disguised : coerced at every step by hostile guards, deprived of the liberty of even visiting his own palaces ; restrained by the mob, whom even Lafayette could not control ; without power, without money, without consideration, it was mere mockery to talk of the throne as forming a constituent part of the government. The experiment of constitutional monarchy had been tried and failed : the president of a

republic would have had more real authority : his palace was nothing but a splendid prison. M. de Bouillé was the person on whom the royal family depended in their distress, and Breteuil the counsellor who directed their steps. The noble and intrepid character of the former, and the great reputation he had acquired by the successful suppression of the revolt at Nancy, as well as his position in command of the principal army on the frontier, naturally suggested him as the person to prepare the means of escape. For some time past he had arranged everything for this purpose ; and, under cover of a military movement on the frontier, had drawn together the most faithful of his troops, to a camp at Montmedy. Detach-¹ments were placed along the road to protect the journey, under the pretext of securing the safe passage of the military chest, containing a considerable treasure, which was expected from Paris.¹

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¹ Bouillé,
229, 236.
Bert. de
Moll. v. 53,
55. Mig. i.
132. Th.
i. 287.

M. de Bouillé's dispositions to receive and protect the august fugitives had been made with his wonted ability, had been submitted to and approved of by the King, and promised entire success. Forty hussars of Lauzun, under M. Boudet, an approved Royalist, received orders to proceed on the 19th June to St Menchould, and early on the following morning to Pont de Sommeville, on the road to Châlons, and await there the King's coming up from Paris—escort him to St Menchould, and return, after depositing the royal family, to Sommeville, and allow no one to pass the bridge for eighteen hours. The Duc de Choiseul and M. de Goguelat, of the *état major*, who were both known to their majesties, and were in the secret, were to accompany this detachment. M. Dandoins, captain of the royal dragoons, was to be at St Menchould on the 20th, and escort the carriage with his troops to Clermont, where a hundred dragoons of the regiment of Monsieur, and sixty of the royal dragoons, under Count Charles de Damas, were to be on the 19th, and accompany the royal carriage to Varennes,

^{77.}
M. de
Bouillé's
arrange-
ments for
the journey.

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where sixty hussars of Lauzun's regiment were to be stationed. Since the 19th a hundred hussars of the same regiment were at Dun, which lay on their road to the Meuse—a very important station, on account of the bridge over that river, and the narrow street which leads to it. At Mouza, a little village between Dun and Stenay, M. de Bouillé stationed fifty horsemen of the regiment Royal Allemand, who could be entirely relied on; while that devoted chief himself was to be with the remainder of the regiment between these two towns, ready to give orders and succour any point which might require it. M. de Goguelat himself was previously instructed to reconnoitre the whole road to Paris, and repair there in person to inform the King of the whole details of the road and arrangements, which he did to their majesties' entire satisfaction.¹

¹ Weber, ii.
78, 79.
Bouillé,
255.

78.
Prepara-
tions at
Paris for
the escape
of the royal
family.

Every precaution on their side had been taken by the royal family to secure their departure from Paris under feigned names, and with the most profound secrecy. They committed, however, one grievous mistake. A military gentleman of known courage had been selected by M. de Bouillé to accompany the royal fugitives in the carriage, and take the general charge of the expedition; but Madame de Tourzel insisted that she should not be separated from the children—no precedent could be found for their travelling without their *gouvernante*, and she accordingly took the place of the soldier. It was at first proposed that the Princess Elizabeth, the Dauphin, and his sister, should proceed separately to Flanders, and the Queen warmly supported this plan: but nothing could bring the King to sever himself from his children, to whom he was tenderly attached. The event proved that the Queen was right. Monsieur, his brother, with Madame, who set out at the same time, arrived safe at Brussels. Passports were obtained for the royal family under feigned names: Madame de Tourzel, the governess of the children, was the Baronne de Korff; the Queen

was her *gouvernante*; the King her *valet de chambre*; the Princess Elizabeth, a young lady of the party; the Dauphin and the Duchess d'Angoulême, the two daughters of the Baroness, under the names of Amelia and Aglæe. Three *gardes du corps*, under feigned names, were to accompany the carriage; two seated on the outside, one riding as a courier to provide horses. An unlucky accident, arising from the illness of the Dauphin's maid, who was a faithful Royalist, which had occasioned another, who had a leaning to the Revolution, to take her place, caused the departure, after every thing had been arranged for the 19th at midnight, to be delayed until the 20th at the same hour; but M. de Bouillé was warned of the change, and the detachments on the road were kept back accordingly. The important duty of driving the carriage which was first to convey the royal fugitives from Paris was intrusted to the tried fidelity of M. de Fersen,* a gallant Swedish nobleman, whom the Queen, from confidence in his fidelity, had suggested for the hazardous charge, and who, on being informed of her choice, instantly repaired from Sweden, where he was at the time, to peril his life in performing the duty assigned to him.¹

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¹ Bouillé, 255, 257.
Weber, ii. 57, 59, 80.
84. Relat. de la Duchesse D'Angoulême, p. 34.

Their design, known to few, was betrayed by none; their manner indicated more than usual confidence; and at length, on the 20th June, at eleven at night, the King, with the Dauphin and the Duchess d'Angoulême, the Princess Elizabeth, and Madame de Tourzel, after sup-

79.
Plans of the Court.
June 20.

* M. Le Comte de Fersen was a young Swedish nobleman of high rank, elegant figure, and a very romantic character, who, when in France several years before, had been much at Versailles, and admitted to the Queen's private circle at Trianon, for whom he conceived an ardent, but respectful and distant admiration. This feeling, as is generally the case with profound attachments in generous minds, was increased by absence, and wrought up to a devout worship by the misfortunes in which the royal family of France was involved. His skill and address were well known; and when the attempt to escape was resolved on, the Queen, with the instinctive knowledge of women, where they have awakened a real attachment, and on whom in a crisis they may rely, immediately suggested him as the person who was to take charge of their flight from Paris: a perilous commission, which he at once and honourably accepted.—See LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, i. 93.

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ping quietly, succeeded in reaching in disguise a carriage on the Quay des Théâtres. The Dauphin was disguised in girl's clothes, and in the highest spirits; he said they were going to play a comedy, as they were in strange dresses. Having got into the carriage, he soon fell fast asleep. The Queen, who set out with a single attendant to avoid suspicion, had nearly betrayed their design. Both being ignorant of the streets of Paris, they lost their way, and accidentally met the carriage of Lafayette, which they only avoided by concealing themselves under the colonnade of the Louvre. At length, after having wandered as far as the Rue du Bac beyond the Pont Royal, they reached the trembling fugitives on the quay, and instantly set out, driven by M. de Fersen, in the carriage provided for them on the road to Montmedy and Châlons. They passed the barrier without being discovered, and reached Bondy in safety, when the chivalrous M. de Fersen, overjoyed at the success, kissed the hands of the King and Queen, and took his departure. They there entered a berline which was ready harnessed by M. de Fersen's care, while the suite got into a cabriolet and proceeded on their journey with post-horses, which were ordered along the road by a courier in advance. Nearly an hour was unhappily lost, by an accident to one of the trams of the royal carriage, which required to be repaired at Montmirail between Meaux and Châlons. But still there was no obstruction offered, and the Queen, overjoyed at such good fortune, said on entering the latter town, "We are saved." The success of their enterprise appeared certain. But the distance from the capital, and the near approach of the royal corps under Bouillé, occasioned a fatal relaxation in their precautions. The King delayed too long on the road, and had the imprudence to show himself publicly at Châlons, where he was recognised by some persons, who, however, had the humanity to keep the secret. Many even offered up prayers for his success.¹ The expected

¹ Relat. du Voyage à Varennes, par la Duchesse D'Angoulême, 34, Campan, ii. 139, 143. Weber, ii. 535. Lac. viii. 243, 256. Bouillé, 239, 244. Mig. i. 132. Th. i. 239.

detachment, however, was not found at the bridge of Sommeville, and the carriage proceeded unattended to St Menehould, the next stage, where the postmaster Drouet, was struck by the resemblance of his countenance to the engraving on the assignat. The ages, the number of the royal family, confirmed him in his suspicions, and after the carriage had departed he sounded the alarm, and despatched one of his friends on a swift horse to cross the country, and intercept him at the succeeding post of Varennes.

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It is painful to reflect on the number of accidents which, by a strange fatality, combined to ruin the enterprise at the very moment when its success seemed certain. The officer in command at St Menehould, who had left Sommeville an hour before the King came up, and returned to his quarters there, observing the motions of Drouet, sounded his trumpets to saddle ; but the national guard surrounded the stables, and prevented the dragoons from mounting their horses. An intrepid sergeant, whom he despatched on the footsteps of the emissary, with the design, if he proved what he suspected, of shooting him, though he got sight of Drouet's messenger, lost him again in a wood. The officer commanding the detachment at Clermont no sooner heard of the arrival of the royal carriages than he mounted his horse, and commanded his men to follow ; but a rumour of the quality of the fugitives had got abroad, and they refused to obey. At Varennes, where they arrived at eleven at night, by a still more deplorable fatality the post-horses were waiting for the King at the further end of the town, not at the place which had been supposed by the royal party to have been agreed on ; and when the carriage stopped, sixty hussars, under the command of a young Royalist officer, were in the town, but at its further end. The royal family were seized with consternation at finding neither relays of horses, nor a guard of soldiers. Had the King, or his courier, de Valory, been informed of the

80.
Journey to
Varennes,
and extra-
ordinary
fatalities
which
caused it to
miscarry.

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change of the place where the relay of horses was placed, they would have been saved, for when they reached Varennes it was near midnight, there were scarce any persons in the streets, and Drouet did not arrive for an hour after.* Such was the anxiety of the Queen, that she went herself, from door to door, inquiring for the horses. In vain they urged the postilions to proceed; the obstinate men delayed their journey for some hours, till Drouet, who had now arrived, had time to rouse the national guard, and barricade a bridge at the eastern side of the town, over which the road passed. When the horses at length were got, and they arrived at the bridge, the two *gardes du corps* who were seated on the front of the carriage prepared their arms to force a passage; but the King, finding his progress opposed by a considerable force, and the muskets of the national guard presented at the carriage, commanded them to submit. The royal fugitives were seized, and reconducted by the armed multitude to the post, from whence information was immediately despatched with the important intelligence to Paris.¹

¹ Lam, Hist. des Gir. i. 101, 104. Goguelat, 27. Relat. du Voyage à Varennes, 37.

81.
The King reveals himself to the mayor, who takes measures to arrest the party.

Meanwhile the dragoons from St Menchould arrived, and were soon followed by those of Lauzun, who ranged themselves round the royal party. The mayor, named Sausse, approached the carriage when it was brought back, and insisted on seeing the passports. These were immediately shown, and proved entirely correct; but Drouet still maintained that they were the royal family, observing, "If you are strangers, as you say, how have you sufficient authority to order up the dragoons who awaited you at St Menchould; how are you surrounded

* "Goguelat avait donné tout le plan au Roi, qui lui avait fait, refait sa leçon. Louis XVI., qui avait une excellente mémoire, la répéta mot pour mot au courrier, de Valory : il lui dit qu'il trouverait des chevaux et un détachement *avant* la ville de Varennes. Or, Goguelat les prit *après*, et il oublia de prévenir le Roi de ce changement au plan convenu. Cela perdit tout. Il passa une demie-heure à chercher dans les ténèbres, à frapper aux portes, faire lever des gens endormis. Le relais pendant ce tems était, de l'autre côté de la ville, tenu prêt par deux jeunes gens, l'un fils de M. de Bouillé; ils avaient l'ordre de ne pas bouger, pour ne donner aucun éveil." —MICHELET, *Histoire de la Révolution*. ii. 506, 507.

by those of Lauzun?" Sausse then approached, and said in a low voice to the King, "The report is spread abroad that we have the happiness to possess the King and his family. The tocsin sounds: the concourse of people from the country will soon be immense. To avoid the chance of a tumult, I have the honour of offering my house as a place of safety." The King, knowing that Bouillé was not far distant, deemed it prudent to accept the offer, and taking his children by the hand, entered the house, followed by the Queen and Madame Elizabeth. Their anxiety was extreme: in speechless suspense they listened for the joyful sound of Bouillé's dragoons, who would at once have effected their deliverance. But not a sound was heard save the increasing murmur of the mob in the street. Meanwhile, the perfidious Sausse surrounded the quarter where the hussars and royal family were with national guards, and wrote off to the municipalities of Clermont and Verdun, with information that the royal family were arrested, and urging them to send their national guards to aid in detaining them, which they instantly did. On the other side, the officer in command of the hussars of Lauzun left Varennes to inform M. de Bouillé of what had happened; and the royal family, in the deepest anxiety, sat up all night. Towards morning, seeing M. de Bouillé had not arrived, he revealed his quality to the mayor, as Marie Antoinette did to his wife. "I am your King," said he, "placed in the capital in the midst of poniards and bayonets: I am going to seek for my faithful subjects liberty and peace. Yes, my friend, it is your King who is in your power: it is your King who implores you not to betray him to his most cruel enemies. Ah! save my wife, my children: fly with us; I will make your fortune, and your town second to none in the kingdom." But all entreaties were in vain, and the stern republican refused to allow them to proceed on their journey, at least till morning.¹

¹ Fontange, Rélat. du Voyage de Varennes, 37. Gogue-lat, 27. Lab. v. 263, 265.

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82.
He is forcibly de-
tained till
the aides-
de-camp of
Lafayette
arrive.

At length the detachments from Sommeville arrived, under M. Choiseul and Goguelat, and M. de Damas with those from Clermont. In spite of the menaces of the national guards, they penetrated into the town, and drew up opposite the house where the King was. M. de Damas entered the building, and in a whisper entreated the King to take a decided part ; but he, looking at his wife and children, said he could not, adding, " Ah ! if they were not with me." The officers, finding that the carriage-way out of Varennes was barricaded at the bridge to the eastward, and impassable, suggested that the King and Queen, with the rest of the royal family, should mount on horseback, and make their way, surrounded by the dragoons, across the fords of the little river, with which they were acquainted. The Queen referred it to the King ; but he rejected the proposal, saying, " Who can be sure that a stray shot may not kill the Queen, or my sister, or children ? Let us consider the matter calmly : the municipality do not refuse to let me pass, they only ask me to wait till morning. Young Bouillé set out at midnight to inform his father, who is at Stenay, of our arrival. It is only eight leagues, two or three hours' march, from hence. Assuredly M. de Bouillé will be here by the morning ; then, without danger, without violence, we may pursue our journey." He little thought how dangers were thickening around him.* Upon this, M. de Goguelat in despair went to the window, and endeavoured to rouse the dragoons to declare for the King ; but they had been for the most part made drunk by the citizens, and answered all his appeals by cries of " Vive la Nation !" Seeing this he went down, singly, to strive against the crowd who surrounded the house ; and in a struggle with the major of the national guard, he was pierced by two balls, which caused him to fall from his horse. About the same time the dragoons came up from Dun ; but by this time the streets were barricaded,

* MICHELET, *Histoire de la Révolution*, ii. 516.

and the commanding officer, with the utmost difficulty, obtained liberty to penetrate alone to the King. Shortly after, the two aides-de-camp of Lafayette arrived from Paris, with orders to detain and bring back the fugitives. —“Thus M. de Lafayette,” said the King, “arrests me a second time.”—“He has nothing but the United States in his head,” replied the Queen; “he will soon see what a French Republic is.” Requesting then to see the decree of the Assembly, she read it, and threw it from her; it fell on the bed where the dauphin and his sister, in a tranquil sleep, lay locked in each other’s arms.¹

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¹ Choiseul,
104, 110.
Bouillé,
251. Rap.
de Damas.
Goguelat,
32. Lac.viii.
266, 267.
Lab. v. 264.
267.

During the whole of this fatal night M. de Bouillé was on horseback, under the walls of Stenay, anxiously expecting the arrival of the King. Informed at four in the morning of the arrest at Varennes, he ordered the regiment of Royal Allemand, on which he could rely, and which lay in that town, to sound to horse; but though they had received directions to be ready to start at daybreak, three quarters of an hour elapsed before they left the town. In vain he sent his son five times to quicken their movements. When they did come, he informed them of what had happened, read to the troops the King’s order to escort him, and do everything for the safety of the royal family, and asked the men if they would deliver their sovereign. The brave Germans answered with the acclamations of honest hearts; and he instantly gave a louis to each man, and set off with all possible expedition for Varennes. But it was five o’clock before he was in motion, and the distance to that place was twenty-six miles of a hilly road. He arrived there at a quarter past nine: it was too late. An hour before, the royal family had set off, under a strong guard, on the road to the capital; and the horses of the German regiments were so totally exhausted by the exertions they had made, that further pursuit was impossible. With inexpressible anguish M. de Bouillé was

83.
Arrest of
the King,
and his
return to
Paris.

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¹ Bouillé,
240, 245.
Lac. viii.
263, Lab.
v. 263, 270.

84.
Real causes
of the fail-
ure of the
journey to
Varennes.

compelled to renounce an object so long the dearest wish of his heart, and doomed soon to witness the succession of unfortunate events which consigned this virtuous monarch to prison and the scaffold. If the officers at Varennes had sent off instantly on the arrival of the royal family to M. de Bouillé, if the orders to start at daybreak had been obeyed by the regiment of Royal Allemand, the troops could have gone the twenty-six miles between four in the morning and eight, and he might have been there an hour sooner—in time to have delivered the royal family, saved the Revolution from its greatest crimes, changed its character by averting the war, and altered the fate of Europe.¹

Various accidents, doubtless, contributed to disconcert this well-combined enterprise ; but they might all have been surmounted save for the treachery or disgraceful irresolution of the royal troops at Varennes, who revolted against their faithful officers, and the officious zeal with which the national guard assembled to prevent the escape of their sovereign. History can supply no ground for pardon for such conduct. Patriotism cannot excuse the citizens, who sought to consign a virtuous monarch and his innocent family to the scaffold. Honour blushes for the soldiers, who forgot their loyalty amidst the cries of the populace, and permitted their sovereign, the heir of twenty kings, to be dragged captive from amidst their armed squadrons. The warmest friend of freedom, if he have a spark of humanity in his bosom, the most ardent republican, if not steeled against every sentiment of honour, must revolt at such baseness. Britain may well exult at the different conduct which her people exhibited to their fugitive monarchs under the same circumstances, and contrast with the arrest of Louis at Varennes, the fidelity of the western counties to Charles II. after the battle of Worcester, and the devotion of the Scotch Highlanders to the Pretender after the defeat of Culloden.*

* The secret of Charles Edward's place of concealment was intrusted to above two hundred persons, most of them in the very poorest circumstances. £30,000

Nor was this treachery without its appropriate punishment. On that day twenty-four years from the one on which the lawful sovereign of France had been arrested at Varennes, Napoleon, the adored chief of the Revolution, was compelled to sign his final abdication at Paris, and to leave France, defeated and humiliated, to bear the yoke of the stranger.*

Paris was in the utmost consternation when the escape of the King was discovered. The public joy was proportionally great when the intelligence of his arrest was received. Three commissioners, Pétion, Latour Maubourg, and Barnave, were despatched to reconduct the prisoners to Paris. They met them at Epernay, and travelled with them to the Tuileries. During the journey, Barnave and Pétion were in the carriage with the King and Queen; and the difference in the character of these two men was soon apparent. The Queen, perceiving from the manners and conversation of Barnave that he was a person of generous feeling and enlightened intellect, conversed openly with him, and produced an impression on his mind which was never afterwards effaced. His attentions to her were so delicate, and his conduct so gentle, that she assured Madame Campan on her return, that she forgave him all the injuries he had inflicted on her family—an indulgence which she could not extend to the many nobles who had betrayed the throne by joining the popular cause. Pétion's conduct, on the other hand, was so gross, and his manners to the illustrious captives so insolent, that it was with difficulty that Barnave could restrain his indignation. He behaved to the princesses of the royal family in a way which scarcely any ill-bred tradesman would do to a common female of his acquaintance.¹† A poor curate approached the carriage to address the King: the mob

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85.

Consternation at Paris. Commissioners sent for the King, and Barnave won to the Royal cause.

¹ Madame de Campan, ii. 150, *et. seq.* Th. i. 289, 299. Lac. viii. 270, 272. Lam. Hist. des Gir. i. 153.

was offered for his apprehension; confiscation and death pronounced against his adherents: yet not one Highlander was faithless to his prince.

* On 21st June 1815.

† “La famille royale sentit qu'elle avait conquis Barnave, dans cette déroute de tant d'espérances. Ce fut ce qui perdit sa vie, mais ce qui grandit sa mémoire. Il n'avait été jusque-là qu'élloquent: il montra qu'il était sensible. Pétion, au contraire, resta froid comme un sectaire et rude comme

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who surrounded it instantly fell upon him, threw him on the ground, and were on the point of putting him to death. "Tigers!" cried Barnave, "have you ceased to be Frenchmen? Calling yourselves brave, have you become assassins?" The difference between the constitutionalists and democrats were already greater than between the former and the throne. From that time forward the Queen intrusted her cause to his care more than to any other man in the Assembly.

86.
Return to
Paris, and
barbarity of
the people
on the road.

The barbarity of the people was singularly evinced during the journey back to Paris. The two body-guards who had perilled their lives in the service of their sovereign were chained on the outside of the carriage; peasants, armed with scythes and pitchforks, mixed with the escort, uttering the bitterest reproaches; and at each village the municipal authorities assembled to vent their execrations upon the fallen monarch. Unable to bear such inhuman conduct, the Count de Dampierre, a nobleman inhabiting a chateau near the road, approached to kiss the hand of the King. He was instantly pierced by several balls from the escort, his blood sprinkled the royal carriage, and his remains were torn to pieces by the savage multitude. Notwithstanding these atrocities, the King conversed with Barnave and Latour Maubourg with such judgment and benevolence on his views of the kingdom and constitution, that they were often melted into tears, and bitterly lamented the part they had taken in the Revolution. "How often," says Thiers, "would factions the most opposite be reconciled, if they could meet and read each other's hearts!"¹

¹ Thiers, i. 289. Campan, ii. 150, 151. Lab. v. 277, 284.

un parvenu : il affecta avec la famille royale une brusque familiarité ; il mangea devant la Reine, et jeta les écorces de fruits par la portière, au risque d'en souiller le visage même du Roi ; quand Madame Elisabeth lui versait du vin, il relevait son verre, sans la remercier, pour lui montrer qu'il en avait assez. Louis XVI. lui ayant demandé s'il était pour la système des deux chambres ou pour la république, — 'Je serais pour la république,' répondit Pétion, 'si je croyais mon pays assez mûr pour cette forme de gouvernement.' Le Roi, offensé, ne répondit pas, et ne proféra plus une seule parole jusqu'à Paris." — LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, i. 153, 154.

During the first transports of alarm and indignation, Lafayette was nearly murdered by the populace of Paris, so general was the belief that the royal family could not have escaped without his connivance. The aide-de-camp whom he had despatched on the first alarm on the road to Varennes, narrowly escaped the same fate. Had he been killed, the royal fugitives would have still been at Varennes when M. de Bouillé arrived, and all their subsequent misfortunes have been avoided. An immense crowd assembled round the Tuileries on the first rumour that the royal family had escaped : the Palais Royal, the Place de Grève, were crowded. At ten, the discharge of three guns from the municipality announced the event : that body declared its sittings permanent, as did the Assembly and Jacobin club. No more decisive evidence could be afforded of the extent to which the King and royal family had been kept enthralled, than the universal consternation which followed their escape. All business was at a stand. Agitated crowds assembled in every street ; the public anxiety for news was indescribable. An immense mob inundated the Tuileries, ransacked the private apartments of the King and Queen, and were astonished to find no instruments of torture, or preparations for massacring the people in them. The national guard all assembled at their rallying-points. The brewer Santerre headed the pikemen of the Faubourg St Antoine : one would have thought, from the preparations, that Europe in arms was approaching the capital—not an unarmed monarch, with his wife and children, flying from it. But, meanwhile, the skilful leaders of the Revolution were not slow in turning to the best account this unexpected event, and the public vehemence which had ensued from it. The club of the Cordeliers passed a resolution, that the National Assembly had enslaved France by declaring the crown hereditary, and demanding the immediate abolition of royalty ;¹ the Jacobins unanimously summoned Lafayette to attend at their bar, to answer the

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87.

Universal
consterna-
tion in Paris
on this
event.

¹ Prudhom.
Rév. de
Paris, No.
102. Marat,
L'Ami du
Peuple, No.
442. Fré-
ron, L'Ora-
teur du
Peuple, No.
46. Journal
des Jaco-
bins, Juin
21. Hist.
Parl. x. 240,
241, 247.

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interrogatories of Danton, and took an oath to defend Robespierre, who declared his life in danger. The name of the King was generally effaced on all signs and monuments ; Marat announced in his journal that a general insurrection was indispensable ; that in a few days, the sanguinary monarch would return at the head of a numerous army, and a hundred guns, to destroy the city by red-hot shot ;* and Fréron thundered in the *Orateur du Peuple* against the infamous Queen, who united the profligacy of Messalina to the bloodthirstiness of the Medici.†

88.
Proceed-
ings in the
Assembly.
June 22.

In the midst of this general effervescence, the Assembly took more efficacious measures to seize the reins of the executive power, and prevent, by every possible means, the escape of the royal fugitives from the kingdom. Couriers were instantly despatched in all directions to the departments, ordering the municipalities and national guards to arrest all travellers, and, above all, to allow none to leave the kingdom ; a letter, which proved to be a forgery, was published in the name of the Queen, in which it was announced that they were proceeding to Flanders, and expressing violent intentions on their return ; and a real address to the French people left by Louis, containing the reasons for his departure, couched in simple and touching terms. After recapitulating the sacrifices he had made for the public good, the violence to which he had been subjected, and the thralldom in which he had so long been kept, he declared that he had no intention of quitting the kingdom, and only desired to regain his personal freedom, in order to be able, unrestrained, to carry into effect his wishes for the restoration of liberty in France,

* “ Une insurrection générale peut seule sauver la République. Dans quelques jours Louis XVI., reprenant le ton d'un despote, s'avancera contre vos murs, à la tête de tous les fugitifs, de tous les mécontents, et des légions Autrichiennes ; cent bouches à feu menaceront d'abattre votre ville à boulets rouges, si vous faites la moindre résistance ; les écrivains populaires seront trainés dans les cachots.”—MARAT, *L'Ami du Peuple*, 21 Juin 1791.

† “ Il est parti ce roi imbécile, ce roi parjure, cette reine scélérate, qui réunit la lubricité de Messaline à la soif du sang qui dévorait Médicis. Femme exécrable, Furie de la France, c'est toi qui étais l'âme du complot ! ”—FRÉRON, *L'Orateur du Peuple*, No. 46, 22 Juin 1791.

and the formation of a constitution.* In answer to this, the Assembly published a counter address, in which they justified their conduct in every particular, and called upon the nation to rally round the representatives of the people. But, meanwhile, they assumed to themselves the whole executive government of the State, and commenced their new duties in the most effective of all ways, by ordering the national guards throughout the whole kingdom to be put in a state of activity, and the departments of the whole northern and eastern departments to place theirs on permanent duty.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
x. 245, 262,
313. Dec-
rees, June
22. Deux
Amis, vi.
102, 123.

At length the captives entered Paris. An immense crowd was assembled to witness their return, who received them in sullen silence. The national guard nowhere presented arms; threatening and frightful cries were heard from the multitude; the people, without uncovering themselves, gazed upon their victims. The appearance of the Queen excited general surprise: her hair had all turned grey, in some places white, during the anxieties of that dreadful journey. It required the utmost efforts of Latour Maubourg and Barnave to prevent the two faithful body-guards from being murdered on the stairs of the Tuileries. Opinions were much divided at Paris upon the consequence of the seizure of the royal family:² the

89.
Return of
the Royal
family to
Paris.

² Moniteur,
27th June,
Campan, ii.
151. M.
Dumas,
Souv. i. 492,
505. Lac.
viii. 271,
281-2-3.
Lab. v. 278,
285.

* Louis dwelt, in this proclamation, in an especial manner, on the personal thralldom in which he had been kept, and the action of the Jacobin clubs, which had come entirely to supersede the government. "Toutes les machinations," says he, "étaient dirigées contre le Roi et la Reine. C'est aux soldats des Gardes Françaises et à la Garde Nationale Parisienne que la garde du Roi a été confiée sous les ordres de la Municipalité de Paris, dont le commandant-général relève. Le Roi s'est ainsi vu prisonnier dans ses propres états. . . . La forme du gouvernement est surtout vicieuse par deux causes: l'Assemblée excède les bornes de ses pouvoirs en s'occupant de la justice et de l'administration de l'intérieur; elle exerce par ses comités le plus barbare de tous les despotismes. Il est établi des associations connues sous le nom des Amis de la Constitution, (Jacobins,) qui offrent des corporations infiniment plus dangereuses que les anciennes; elles exercent une influence tellement prépondérante que tous les corps, sans en excepter l'Assemblée Nationale, ne font rien que par leur ordre. Français, est-ce là ce que vous entendiez en envoyant vos représentants? Désiriez-vous que le despotisme des clubs remplacât la monarchie, sous laquelle le royaume a prospéré pendant quatorze cents ans?"—LOUIS *au Peuple Français*, 20 Juin 1791; *Histoire Parlementaire*, x. 272, 273.

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democrats openly rejoiced in the re-establishment of their power over them ; the humane were already terrified by the prospect of the fate which to all appearance awaited them ; the thoughtful were embarrassed as to how they were to be disposed of. In truth, however, after they were fairly gone, although the mob thirsted for vengeance, and were in the greatest agitation at the thought of the escape of the royal fugitives, few of the men of any consideration in Paris were anxious for their arrest.

90.
Views of the
parties on
the flight of
the King.

The leaders of the popular party were rejoiced at the near prospect of a republic, which the King's flight afforded : the constitutionalists, in good faith, desired to see him established at Montmedy, and emancipated from the state of thralldom in which he had so long been held by the populace. Many of the royalists were not displeased at the abandonment of the helm by a sovereign whose concessions had brought the monarchy to the brink of ruin ; all were gratified at his extrication from the iron despotism of Parisian democracy. In sending the commissioners to arrest the King, the Assembly, in opposition to its better judgment, yielded to the clamours of an impassioned populace. "The National Assembly," says Napoleon, "never committed so great an error as in bringing back the King from Varennes. A fugitive and powerless, he was hastening to the frontier, and in a few hours would have been out of the French territory. What should they have done in these circumstances ? Clearly facilitated his escape, and declared the throne vacant by his desertion ; they would thus have avoided the infamy of a regicide government, and attained their great object of republican institutions. Instead of which, by bringing him back, they embarrassed themselves with a sovereign whom they had no just reason for destroying, and lost the inestimable advantage of getting quit of the royal family without an act of cruelty."¹ These are the words of a man who never scrupled at the means necessary to gain an end ; who was weakened by no mawkish sensibility,

¹ Napoleon's
Memoirs, i.
1. Th. i.
292, 293.

and deterred by no imaginary dangers. They are a striking illustration of the eternal truth, that cruelty is in general as short-sighted as it is inhuman, and that no conduct is so wise as that which is the least open to moral reproach.

The return of the King a captive to Paris, and the necessity of settling something definitive as to his fate, occasioned an immediate division between the parties in the capital, and first led to the open avowal of republican principles. The mob, with savage ferocity, openly demanded his head ; a republic was loudly called for in the clubs of the Cordeliers and Jacobins ; Robespierre, Marat, and their associates, daily inflamed the public mind by publications and speeches, having the most revolutionary tendency. "If a republic," said Condorcet, "ensues in consequence of a new revolution, the results will be terrible ; but if it is proclaimed just now, during the omnipotence of the Assembly, the transition will be easy ; and it is incomparably better to make it when the power of the King is wholly prostrated, than it will be when he may so far have regained it as to make an effort to avert the blow." No one at that period ventured to argue in the Assembly that royalty was desirable in itself, or as a counterpoise to the ambition of the people ; the fact that such a doctrine could not be broached in the legislature, is the strongest proof how indispensable it is to regulated freedom that it should exist. Seditious cries were incessantly heard in the streets ; an expression of ferocity characterised the countenances of the numerous groups assembled in the public places ; and the frightful figures began to be seen who had emerged from obscurity on the 5th October, and who subsequently proved triumphant during the Reign of Terror. On the other hand, the upright and intelligent part of the Assembly, awakened by the threatening signs which surrounded them to a sense of the impending danger, united their strength to resist the multitude.¹ Barnave, Duport, and Lameth,

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91.

First open avowal of Republican principles, and new division of parties in the Assembly.

¹ Marat, L'Ami du Peuple, No. 500, 501. Journal des Jacobins, 10 Juillet. Dumont, 325. Deux Amis, vi. 135, 211, 225. Lac. viii. 284. 285, 292. De Staël, i. 361.

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although passionate friends of freedom, coalesced with Lafayette and the supporters of a constitutional monarchy. In the struggle which ensued, the want of the powerful voice of Mirabeau was severely felt. But even his commanding eloquence would have been unavailing. In these days of rising democracy and patrician desertion, nothing could resist the new-born energy of the people.

92.
The royal
authority is
suspended
by a decree
of the As-
sembly.
June 23.

On the morning after his return, Louis was, by a decree of the Assembly, provisionally suspended from his functions; and a band, composed of national guards, was placed over his person, that of the Queen, and the Dauphin. All the three were judicially and minutely examined by three deputies, but nothing tending to criminate any was elicited. They were strictly watched in the palace, and allowed only to take a morning walk in the garden of the Tuileries before the public were admitted: national guards even kept guard all night in the Queen's bedroom. Meanwhile the Assembly prepared a memoir on the subject of the King's flight. Barnave and the two Lameths now had the generosity openly to espouse the cause of the unfortunate monarch; and it was in a great degree owing to the address and ability of the former, who suggested the answers of the King and Queen to the commissioners of the Assembly, that he was able to show that he never intended to leave France, but only to extricate himself from the dangers of the capital. Bouillé, who had retired to Luxembourg, beyond the frontier of France, at the same time wrote a letter to the Assembly, in which he generously took upon himself the entire criminality of the journey, by protesting that he was its sole author; while he declared, in the name of the allied sovereigns, to whose territories he soon after withdrew, that he would hold them responsible for the safety of the royal prisoners.¹

¹ Weber, ii.
136. Deux
Amis, vi.
186, 196.
Hist. Parl.
x. 402. Th.
i. 302, 303.

The object of the republicans was to make the flight of the King the immediate pretext for his dethronement and death; that of the constitutionalists, to preserve the

throne which they had done so much to shake, notwithstanding the unfortunate issue of that attempt. The examination of Louis, on the subject of his journey to Varennes, was intended by the republicans to be the groundwork of his prosecution; but it was so adroitly managed by the committees to whom it was referred, that, instead of affecting that object, it went far to exculpate him even in the eyes of the most violent of the Jacobin party, by showing that it was not his intention to have left the kingdom, but only to have withdrawn to a place of safety within it. The seven committees, to whom that important examination was intrusted, reported that the journey of the King afforded no foundation for an accusation against him. The debate on this report called forth the energies of the most distinguished leaders, and developed the principles on both sides. The inviolability of the King's person, which had been solemnly agreed to by the Assembly, was the basis of the argument on the constitutional side.¹

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93.

Object of
the Repub-
licans.¹ Hist. Parl.
xi. 1, 68.

“To admit,” said Robespierre, in answer, “the inviolability of the King for acts which are personal to himself, is to establish a god upon earth. We can allow no fiction to consecrate impunity to crime, or give any man a right to bathe our families in blood. But you have decreed, it is said, this inviolability: so much the worse. An authority more powerful than that of the constitution now condemns it; the authority of reason, the conscience of the people, the duty of providing for their safety. The constitution has not decreed the absolute inviolability of the sovereign; it has only declared him not responsible for the acts of his ministers. To this privilege, already immense, are you prepared to add an immunity from every personal offence—from perjury, murder, or robbery? Shall we, who have levelled so many other distinctions, leave this, the most dangerous of them all? Ask of England if she recognises such an impunity in her sovereigns? Would you behold a beloved son murdered

94.

Argument
of Robes-
pierre
against the
King.

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before your eyes by a furious king, and hesitate to deliver him over to criminal justice? Enact laws which punish all crimes without exception, or suffer the people to avenge them for themselves. You have heard the oaths of the King. Where is the jurymen, who, after having heard his manifesto, and the account of his journey, would hesitate to declare him guilty of perjury, that is, felony towards the nation? The King is inviolable; but so are you. Do you now contend for his privilege to murder with impunity millions of his subjects? Do you dare to pronounce the King innocent, when the nation has declared him guilty? Consult its good sense, since your own has abandoned you. I am called a republican: whether I am or not, I declare my conviction, that any form of government is better than that of a feeble monarch, alternately the tool of contending factions.”¹

¹ Moniteur,
15th July.
Hist. Parl.
xi. 242, 244.
Lac. viii.
292, 295,
296. Mig.
i. 135, 136.

95.
And of
Barnave
in reply.

“Regenerators of the empire,” said Barnave, in reply, “follow—continue the course you have commenced. You have already shown that you have courage enough to destroy the abuses of power; now is the time to demonstrate that you have the wisdom to protect the institutions you have formed. At the moment that we evince our strength, let us manifest our moderation; let us exhibit to the world, intent on our movements, the fair spectacle of peace and justice. What would the trial of the King be, but the proclamation of a republic? Are you prepared to destroy, at the first shock, the constitution you have framed with so much care? You are justly proud of having closed a Revolution, without a parallel in the annals of the world: you are now called on to commence a new one—to open a gulf, of which no human wisdom can see the bottom; in which laws, lives, and property would be alike swallowed up. With wisdom and moderation, you have exercised the vast powers committed to you by the State: you have created liberty; beware of substituting in its stead a violent and sanguinary despotism. Be assured that those who now propose to pass sentence

on the King, will do the same to yourselves when you first thwart their ambition. If you prolong the Revolution, it will increase in violence. You will be beset with clamours for confiscations and murders ; the people will never be satisfied but with substantial advantages, and they cannot be obtained but by destroying their superiors. The world hitherto has been awed by the powers we have developed ; let it now be charmed by the gentleness which graces them." Moved by these generous sentiments, and in secret alarmed at the general avowal of republican principles with which they were surrounded, the Assembly adopted the report of the committee with only seven dissentient voices. But to this decree was annexed, as a concession to the popular party, a clause, declaring, that if the King shall put himself at the head of an armed force, and direct it against the nation, he shall be deemed to have abdicated, and shall be responsible for his acts as an ordinary citizen. Of this enactment the popular party made fatal use in the subsequent insurrections against the throne.¹

Foiled in their endeavours to influence the Assembly, the democrats next attempted to rouse the people. A petition for his immediate dethronement, drawn up by Brissot, editor of the *Patriote Français*, and an able republican, in conjunction with Marat, was taken to the Champ de Mars for signature. The clubs of the Jacobins and the Cordeliers declared that they would no longer recognise Louis as sovereign, and published the most inflammatory harangues, which were immediately placarded in all the streets of Paris. A general insurrection was prepared for the following day. "We will repair," said they, "to the Field of the Federation, and a hundred thousand men will dethrone the perjured King. That day will be the last of all the friends of treason." The 17th July was the day fixed for the insurrection ; there was no regular force in Paris ; everything depended on the firmness of the national guard. On the morning of that day, two different bands

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17th July.

¹ Moniteur,
17th July
1791. Hist.
Parl. xi. 67,
68. Deux
Amis, vi.
211, 227.
Mig. i. 137.
Lac. viii.
298, 302.
Th. i. 309,
310.

96.
Revolt in
the Champ
de Mars.

July 17.

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of the people were in motion : one decently clothed, grave in manner, small in number, headed by Brissot ; the other, hideous in aspect, ferocious in language, formidable in numbers, under the guidance of Robespierre. Both were confident of success, and sure of impunity ; for hitherto not a single insurrection had been suppressed, and hardly one popular crime, excepting the murder of the baker François, had been punished. Two unhappy Invalids had placed themselves under the steps of the altar on the Champ de Mars to observe the extraordinary scene ; a cry arose that they were assassins placed there to blow up the leaders of the people : without giving themselves the trouble to ascertain whether any powder was there, they beheaded the unhappy wretches on the spot, and paraded their heads on pikes round the altar of France.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, vi.
229, 245.
Moniteur,
18 Juillet
1791. Lac.
viii. 303,
312. Th. i.
311.

97.

Vigorous
measures of
the Assem-
bly. Vic-
tory of La-
fayette.

The Assembly, in this emergency, took the most energetic measures to support its authority. It declared its sittings permanent, and caused the municipality to summon the national guards to their several rendezvous ; Lafayette put himself at their head, and proceeded towards the Champ de Mars, followed by twelve hundred grenadiers. On the road, a traitor in the ranks discharged a pistol at him, which fortunately missed its aim ; he had the magnanimity to liberate the offender from the confinement in which he was placed. Meanwhile the red flag was boldly hoisted, by order of Bailly, at the Hotel de Ville, and the good citizens earnestly urged the proclamation of martial law. Arrived in sight of the insurgents, Lafayette unfurled the red flag, and summoned the multitude, in name of the law, to disperse. Cries of “ A bas le drapeau rouge ! à bas les baïonnettes ! ” accompanied by volleys of stones, were the only answer. A discharge in the air was then given, which, not being attended by the effect of intimidation, Lafayette resolutely ordered a volley point-blank, which immediately brought down a great number of the insurgents. In an instant the crowd dispersed, and the Champ de Mars was deserted. Robespierre, Danton, Fréron,

Marat, and the other leaders of the insurrection, disappeared, and the discouragement of the party was complete. Trembling with apprehension, the former implored an asylum from his friends, deeming himself insecure, notwithstanding his inviolability as a deputy, in his obscure abode. The revolutionary fury was effectually quelled; and had the government possessed the energy to have marched on the clubs of the Jacobins and the Cordeliers, and closed these great fountains of treason, the constitutional monarchy might have been established, and the Reign of Terror prevented. But this act of vigour, being followed by no others of the same character, gradually lost its effect; the clubs resumed their inflammatory debates: Marat, Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Fréron, and the other popular leaders, seeing that no prosecutions followed the arrests, reappeared from their retreats, and the march of the Revolution went on with redoubled vigour. The recollection of so signal a defeat, however, sunk deep in the minds of the democrats, and they took a bloody revenge, years afterwards, upon the intrepid Bailly, who had first hoisted the signal of resistance to popular licentiousness.¹

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¹ Prudhom.
Rév. de
Paris, No.
106, p. 65.
Deux Amis,
vi. 245, 251.
Hist. Parl.
xi. 107, 112.
Bert. de
Moll. v. 178.
Lac. viii.
312, 315.
Th. i. 311,
312.

The Assembly was embarrassed by the consequences of its own success. It received congratulatory addresses from every part of France; the cities, the provinces, vied with each other in the expression of satisfaction at the stand at last made against a faction which had disgraced the Revolution. All of them had a moderate, many a royalist tendency—a signal proof of the ease with which at this period the Revolution might have been checked by proper firmness in the government and union among the higher classes. So pressing did the danger to the Jacobins become that Pétion published a long letter on the subject, which produced a great impression. But it was difficult for the Assembly, in the close of their career, to depart from the principles with which they had commenced; and they were alarmed at the new allies who crowded round their

98.
But the
constitution-
alists
do not fol-
low it up.

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victorious standard. Indecision, in consequence, characterised their proceedings. Recollection of the past inclined them to popular, dread of the future to constitutional measures. In their efforts to please all factions, they acquired an ascendancy over none, and left the monarchy a prey to the furious passions which now agitated the people, from the consequences of the excitement they themselves had originated. The termination of their labours was now approaching. The several committees to whom the different departments of the constitution had been referred had all made their reports; the members were fatigued with their divisions, the people desirous of exercising the powers of election. Nothing remained but to combine the decrees regarding the constitution into one act, and submit it for the sanction of the King.¹

¹ Hist. Parl. xi. 175, 177.
Bert. de Moll. v. 183, 210. Lab. v. 361. Mig. i. 139, 140.
Th. i. 316.
Lac. viii. 317, 318.

99.
Proposal to
modify the
constitution.

It was proposed, in consolidating the different decrees regarding the constitution, to revise some of its articles. The democratic tendency of many parts was already perceived; and the Assembly trembled at the agitation which pervaded the empire. All the subordinate questions which remained were decided in favour of the royal authority; but they wanted courage, and perhaps had not influence, to alter the cardinal points of the constitution. They were strongly urged, before it was too late, to correct their faults. "Have the courage," said Malouet, "to confess your errors, and repair them. You are inclined to efface some blemishes; go a step further, and correct some deformities. While the work is still in your hands, is it not better to give more strength and stability to the fabric?" The design of Barnave, Malouet, and the Lameths, who were now fully alive to the perilous nature of the constitution they had framed, was to restore the separation of the chambers, and give the absolute veto to the Crown. For this purpose, it was agreed that Malouet should propose the revision of these and many other articles of the constitution; that Barnave should reply in vehement strains, but at the same time give up those that

were agreed on, as proved by experience to be inexpedient. But while this was the general opinion of the rational and prudent members, the violent party-men on both sides, though from different motives, combined to hasten the dissolution of the Assembly. The Royalists wished that the faults of the constitution should remain so glaring, as to render it impossible to put it in practice. The Jacobins, more alive to the signs of the times, dreaded the reaction in favour of order which had recently begun among the higher, and hoped everything from the revolutionary spirit which was now spreading among the lower orders. "My friends," said Robespierre to the mobs which began to collect, in order to intimidate the Assembly, "you arrive too late : all is lost, the King is saved." In vain Barnave, Lameth, Chapelier, and other enlightened men, implored them to retain the legislative power yet a while in their hands ; they were met by complaints of their unpopularity, and of the necessity of dissolving while yet any influence remained ; and the majority, weary of the work of regeneration, resolved to separate. As a last measure of security, they declared that the representatives of France might revise the constitution, but not till after the expiration of thirty years—a vain precaution, immediately forgotten amid the impetuosity and struggles of their successors.¹

Before finally submitting the constitution to the King, the Assembly, on the motion of Robespierre, passed a destructive measure, similar to the self-denying ordinance of the English parliament, declaring that none of its members should be capable of election into the next legislature. This resolution, so ruinous in its consequences, was agreed to under the influence of various motives. The desire of regaining their power on the part of the aristocrats ; inextinguishable resentment against the leaders of the Assembly on the part of the court ; wild hopes of anarchy, and a fear of reaction in the existing members, on the part of the democrats ; patriotic feeling among the

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¹ Ferrières,
Mém.ii.453.
Hist. Parl.
xi. 350, 371.
Bert. de
Moll.v.211,
215. Mig.
i. 140, 143.
Lac. viii.
320, 321.
Th. i. 315.

100.
Self deny-
ing ordi-
nance.
Sept. 4.

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friends of their country ; a wish for the popularity consequent on a disinterested action—combined to secure the passing of a decree fraught with the last miseries to France. The King was so ill advised at this juncture, that he employed all his own influence, and that of the Queen, to procure the enactment of this ordinance. The idea was prevalent among the Royalists that the public mind was entirely changed—that the people had become attached to the sovereign ; and that, if the old members could only be excluded, an Assembly would be returned at the next election which would undo all that the present one had done. When the question accordingly was proposed, the Royalists united with the Jacobins, and, stifling all arguments by a cry for the vote, passed the fatal resolution. This system of changing their governors at stated periods always has been, and always will be, a favourite one with republicans, because it magnifies their own, and diminishes their rulers' importance ; but it is more ruinous to national welfare than any other system that can be devised, because it places the direction of affairs constantly in inexperienced hands, and removes ability from the helm at the very time it is beginning to become adequate to the guidance of public affairs.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xi. 339, 392.
Moniteur,
Sept. 5.
Dumont,
333, 339.
Mig. i. 141.
Th. i. 314.
Lac. viii.
323.

101.
The King
reinvested
with his
power.
Sept. 13.

Previous to the act of the constitution being submitted to the King, he was reinvested with the power of appointing a guard, and restored to the freedom of which he had been deprived since his arrest at Varennes. After several days' careful examination, he declared his acceptance in the following terms :—"I accept the constitution ; I engage to maintain it alike against civil discord and foreign aggression, and to enforce its execution to the utmost of my power." This message occasioned the warmest applause. Lafayette, taking advantage of the moment, procured a general amnesty for all those who had been engaged in the flight of the King, or compromised by the events of the Revolution. On the following day, the King repaired in person to the Assembly, to declare his acceptance of the constitution. The Queen, accompanied by the

dauphin, was in the reporters' box, and in the enthusiasm of the moment was received with cheers. An immense crowd accompanied the sovereign with loud acclamations ; he was the object of the momentary applause of the tribunes of the people : but the altered state of the royal authority was evinced by the formalities observed even in the midst of the general enthusiasm. The monarch was no longer seated on the throne apart from his subjects ; two chairs, in every respect alike, were allotted to him and to the President of the Assembly ; and he did not possess, even in appearance, more authority than the leader of that haughty body.¹

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Sept. 14.

¹ Moniteur, Sept. 14, p. 1070.
Hist. Parl. xi. 399, 403.
Deux Amis, vi. 312, 316.
Lac. viii. 351. Th. i. 316.

At length, on the 29th September, the sittings of the Assembly were closed. The King attended in person, and delivered a speech full of generous sentiments and eloquent expressions. "In returning to your constituents," said he, "you have still an important duty to discharge ; you have to make known to the citizens the real meaning of the laws you have enacted, and to explain my sentiments to the people. Tell them, that the King will always be their first and best friend ; that he has need of their affection ; that he knows no enjoyment but in them and with them ; that the hope of contributing to their happiness will sustain his courage, as the satisfaction of having done so will constitute his reward." Vehement and sincere applause followed these expressions. The president, Thouret, then with a loud voice said, "The Constituent Assembly declares its mission accomplished, and its sittings are now closed." Magnificent fêtes were ordered by the King for the occasion, which exhausted the already weakened resources of the throne. The palace and gardens of the Tuileries were superbly illuminated ; and the King, with the Queen and the royal family, drove through the long lighted avenues of the Champs Elysées amidst the acclamations of the people. But a vague disquietude pervaded all ranks of society ; the monarch sought in vain for the expressions of sincere joy which appeared on the fête of the Federation of the 14th July :¹ then all was con-

102.
Closing of the Assembly.

¹ Deux Amis, vi. 312, 316.
Lab. v. 423, 426. De Staël, i. 434, 436. Lac. viii. 352, 353. Mig. i. 142.

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fidence and hope—now the horrors of anarchy were daily anticipated. The Assembly had declared the Revolution closed ; all persons of intelligence feared that it was only about to commence.

103.
Merits of the
Constituent
Assembly.

Such is the history of the Constituent Assembly of France—an Assembly which, amidst much good, has produced more evil than any which has ever existed in the world. Called to the highest destinies, intrusted with the noblest duties, it was looked to as commencing a new era in modern civilisation—as regenerating an empire grey with feudal corruption, but teeming with popular energy. How it accomplished the task is now ascertained by experience. Time, the great vindicator of truth, has unfolded its errors and illustrated its virtues. The great evils which then afflicted France were removed by its exertions. Liberty of religious worship, but imperfectly provided for in 1787, was secured in its fullest extent ; torture, the punishment of the wheel, and all cruel corporal inflictions, other than death, were abolished ; trial by jury, publicity of criminal proceedings, the examination of witnesses before the accused, counsel for his defence, fixed by law ; the ancient parliaments, the fastnesses of a varied jurisprudence, though ennobled by great exertions in favour of freedom, were suppressed, and one uniform system of criminal jurisprudence was introduced. *Lettres-de-cachet* were annihilated ; exemptions from taxation on the part of the nobles and the clergy were extinguished ; an equal system of finance was established through the whole kingdom ; the most oppressive imposts, those on salt and tobacco, the taille, and the tithes, were suppressed ; the privileges of the nobility, the feudal burdens, were abolished. France owes to the Constituent Assembly the doubtful experiment of national guards ; the opening of the army to courage and ability from every class of society ; and a general distribution of landed property among the labouring classes—the greatest benefit, when not brought about by injustice or the spoliation of others, which can be

conferred upon a nation.* The beneficial effect of these changes was speedily demonstrated by the consequences of the errors into which her government subsequently fell. They enabled the nation to bear, and to prosper under, accumulated evils, any one of which would have extinguished the national strength under the monarchy—national bankruptcy, depreciated assignats, civil divisions, the Reign of Terror, foreign invasion, the conscriptions of Napoleon, subjugation by Europe.¹

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¹ De Stael,
i. 276, 288.

The errors of the Constituent Assembly have produced consequences equally important, some still more lasting. By destroying, in a few months, the constitution of a thousand years, it set adrift all the ideas of men, and spread the fever of innovation universally throughout the empire. By confiscating the property of the church, it gave a fatal precedent of injustice, too closely followed in future times, exasperated a large and influential class, and rendered public manners dissolute by leaving the seeds of war between the clergy and the people. By establishing the right of universal suffrage, and conferring the nomination of all offices of trust upon the nation, it habituated the people to the exercise of powers inconsistent with the

104.
And its
errors and
faults.

* It is impossible to travel through Switzerland, the Tyrol, Norway, Sweden, Biscay, and some other parts of Europe, where the peasantry are proprietors of the land they cultivate, without being convinced of the great effect of such a state of things in ameliorating the condition of the lower orders, and promoting the development of those habits of comfort and those artificial wants, which form the true regulators of the principle of increase. The aspect of France since the Revolution, when compared with what it was before that event, abundantly proves that its labouring poor have experienced the benefit of this change; and that, if it had not been brought about by injustice, its fruits would have been highly beneficial. But no great act of iniquity can be committed by a nation, any more than an individual, without its consequences being felt by the latest generations. The confiscation of land has been to France what a similar measure had before been to Ireland,—a source of weakness and discord which will never be closed. It has destroyed the barrier alike against the crown and the populace, and left the nation no protection against the violence of either. Freedom has been rendered to the last degree precarious, from the consequences of this great change: and the subsequent irresistible authority of the central government, how tyrannical soever, at Paris, may be distinctly traced to the prostration of the strength of the provinces by the destruction of their landed proprietors. The ruinous consequences of this injustice upon the future freedom of France will be amply demonstrated in the sequel of this work.

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monarchical form of government which it had itself established, and which the new possessors were incapable of exercising with advantage either to themselves or the state. It diminished the influence of the crown to such a degree as to render it incapable of controlling the people, and left the kingdom a prey to factions arising out of the hasty changes which had been introduced. By excluding themselves from the next Assembly, its members deprived France of all the benefits of their experience, and permitted their successors to commence the same course of error and innovation, to the danger of which they had been too late awakened. By combining the legislature into one assembly, in which the representatives of the lower ranks had a decisive superiority, it in effect vested supreme political power in one single class of society—a perilous gift at all times, but in an especial manner to be dreaded when that class was in a state of violent excitement, and totally unaccustomed to the powers with which it was intrusted. By removing the check of a separate deliberate assembly, it exposed the political system to the unrestrained influence of those sudden gusts of passion to which all large assemblages of men are occasionally subject, and to which the impetuosity of the national character rendered such an assembly in France in an especial manner liable. By destroying the parliaments, the hierarchy, the corporations, and the privileges of the provinces, it swept away the firmest bulwark by which constitutional freedom might have been protected in future times, by annihilating those institutions which combine men of similar interests together, and leaving only a multitude of insulated individuals to maintain a hopeless contest with the executive and the capital, wielding at will the power of the army and the resources of government. By the overthrow of the national religion, and appropriation to secular purposes of all the funds for its support, it not only gave the deepest wound to public virtue, but inflicted an irreparable injury on the cause of freedom, by arraying under opposite banners

the two great governing powers of the human mind—diminishing the influence of the elevated and spiritual, and removing all control over the selfish principles of our nature.

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It is a fact worthy of the most serious consideration from all who study the action and progress of the human mind under the influence of such convulsions, that all these great and perilous changes were carried into effect by the Assembly, not only without any authority from their constituents, but directly in the face of the cahiers containing the official announcement of the intentions of the electors. The form of government which it established, the confiscation of ecclesiastical property which it introduced, the abolition of the provincial parliaments, the suspensive veto, the destruction of titles of honour, the infringement on the right of the King to make peace or war, the nomination of judges by the people, were all so many usurpations directly contrary to the great majority of these official instruments, which still remain a monument of the moderation of the people at the commencement, as their subsequent acts were proof of their madness during the progress, of the Revolution.¹

105.
Which were
all com-
mitted in
the face of
their in-
structions.

¹ Calonne,
216, 218,
222, 223,
290, 304.

The single fault of the Constituent Assembly, which led to all these disastrous consequences, was, that, losing sight of the object for which alone it was assembled—the redress of grievances—it directed all its efforts to the attainment of power. Instead of following out the first object, and improving the fabric of the state, to which it was called by the monarch and sent by the country, it contended only for the usurpation of absolute power in all its departments; and in the prosecution of that design destroyed all the balances and equipoises which gave it a steady direction, and serve as correctives to any violent disposition which may exist in any of the orders. When it had done this, it instantly, and with unpardonable perfidy, laid the axe to the root equally of public faith and private right, by confiscating the property of the church. It made and recorded what has been aptly styled by Mr

106.
Vicious
principle
which led to
all these
disasters.

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Burke a digest of anarchy, called the Rights of Man, and by its influence destroyed every hold of authority by opinion, religious or civil, on the minds of the people. "The real object," says Mr Burke, "of all this, was to level all those institutions, and sever all those connections, natural, religious, and civil, which hold together society by a chain of subordination—to raise soldiers against their officers, tradesmen against their landlords, curates against their bishops, children against their parents." A universal liberation from all restraints, civil and religious—moral, political, and military—was the grand end of all their efforts, which the weakness of the holders of property enabled them to carry into complete effect. Their precipitance, rashness, and vehemence in these measures, were the more inexcusable, seeing they had not the usual apology of revolutionists, that they were impelled by terror or necessity. On the contrary, their whole march was a continued triumph—their popularity was such that they literally directed the public movement: in unresisted might, their pioneers went before them, levelling in the dust alike the bulwarks of freedom, the safeguards of property, the buttresses of religion, the restraints of virtue.¹

¹ Burke, v.
14, 15, 89.

107.
Fatal crea-
tion of re-
volutionary
interests.

But the most ruinous step of the Constituent Assembly, that which rendered all the others irreparable, was the great number of revolutionary *interests* which they created. By transferring political power into new and inexperienced hands, who valued the acquisition in proportion to their unfitness to exercise it: by creating a host of proprietors, dependent upon the new system for their existence; by placing the armed and civil force entirely at the disposal of the populace—they founded lasting interests upon fleeting passions, and perpetuated the march of the Revolution, when the people would willingly have reverted to a monarchical government. The persons who had gained either power or property by these changes, it was soon found, would yield them up only to force; the individuals who would be endangered by a return to a legal system,

strove to the utmost of their power to prevent it. The prodigious changes in property and political power, therefore, which the Constituent Assembly introduced, rendered the alternative of a revolution, or a bloody civil war, unavoidable ; for though passion is transitory, the interests which changes created by passion may have produced are lasting in their operation. The subsequent annals of the Revolution exhibited many occasions on which the people struggled hard to shake off the tyranny which it had created ; none in which the gainers by its innovations did not do their utmost to prevent a return to a constitutional or legal government. This was the great cause of the difference between the subsequent progress of the French and the English Revolutions. The Long Parliament and Cromwell made no essential changes in the property or political franchises of Great Britain ; and consequently, after the military usurper expired, no powerful revolutionary interests existed to resist a return to the old constitution. In France, before the Constituent Assembly had sat six months, they had rendered a total change in the structure of society unavoidable, because they had transferred to the multitude nearly the whole influence and possessions of the state.

The Constituent Assembly, if it has done nothing else, has at least bequeathed one important political lesson to mankind, which is, the vanity of the hope—that, by conceding to the demands of a revolutionary party an increase of political power, it is possible to put a stop to further encroachments. It is the nature of such a desire, as of every other vehement passion, to be insatiable ; to feed on concessions and acquisitions ; and become more powerful and dangerous in proportion as less remains for it to obtain. This truth was signally demonstrated by the history of this memorable Assembly. Concession there went on at the gallop : the rights of the King, the nobles, the clergy, the parliaments, the corporations, and the provinces, were abandoned as fast as they were

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108.

Proves the impossibility of extinguishing revolutionary passion by concession.

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attacked. Resistance was nowhere attempted ; and yet the popular party, so far from being satisfied, incessantly rose in its demands. Democratic ambition was never so violent as when it had triumphed over every other authority in the commonwealth. The legislature, the leaders of the state, in vain strove to maintain their ascendancy by giving up everything which their antagonists demanded : in proportion as they receded, their opponents advanced ; and the party which had professed at first a desire only for a fair proportion of political influence, soon became indignant if the slightest opposition was made to its authority.¹

¹ Burke's
Consid. v.
89.

109.
Cause to
which this
was owing.

This extraordinary fact suggests an important conclusion in political science, which was first enunciated by Mr Burke, but has, since his time, been abundantly verified by experience. This is, that there is a wide difference between popular convulsions which spring from real grievances, and those which arise merely from popular zeal or democratic passion. There is a boundary to men's passions when they act from reason, resentment, or interest, but none when they are stimulated by imagination or ambition. Remove the grievances complained of, and, when men act from the first motives, you go a great way towards quieting a commotion. But the good or bad conduct of a government, the protection men have enjoyed, or the oppression they have suffered under it, are of no sort of moment, when a faction proceeding on speculative grounds is thoroughly roused against its form. It is the combination of these two different principles, so opposite in nature and character, but yet co-operating at the moment to induce the same effect, which renders the management of a nation in such circumstances so extremely difficult ; for the concessions and reforms which are the appropriate remedies for, and are best calculated to remove the discontent arising from the real grievances, are precisely the steps likely to rouse to the highest pitch the fervour springing from the imaginative passions.¹

¹ Burke, vi.
259.

The great point of difficulty, and that on which the judgment of a statesman is most imperatively required, is to determine *when the proper period for resistance has arrived*. That such a period will arrive in all revolutions, may be predicted with perfect certainty, because their effects will ere long display themselves in a way obvious to every capacity. Even during the sitting of the Constituent Assembly this event had taken place ; for during the two years and five months it lasted, no less than three thousand seven hundred and fifty-three persons perished of a violent death, and a hundred and seven chateaus were committed to the flames. It was a poor compensation for those disasters, that the Assembly passed two thousand five hundred and fifty laws, the great majority of which were repealed or forgotten during the progress of the Revolution.¹ But though such disasters will ever be present to the prophetic vision of foresight, from the very outset of revolutionary troubles, and amidst the general transports of the unthinking multitude, yet it is by no means safe for the statesman to act on such anticipations the moment they become pregnant in his own mind, and those of the few historic students or thinking men in the country. Government has need of the support of physical strength to enforce its measures ; and if the great majority of the nation have become imbued with revolutionary sentiments, it is generally in vain to hoist the standard of decided resistance, till the holders of property and better class of citizens have become sensible of its necessity, from a practical experience of the effects of an opposite system. Philosophers and historians, who trust to the unaided force of truth, can never state it too early or too strongly ; but statesmen, who must rely on the support of others, should wait for the moment of action, the period when dangers or catastrophes, which strike the senses, have procured for them the support, not only of the thinking few, but of the unthinking many.

The personal character of the King was doubtless the

CHAP.
VI.

1791.

110.

When
should re-
sistance to
revolution
be made ?

¹ Prudhom.
Crimes de
la Rév. iii.
312, and
324.

CHAP.
VI.

1791.

111.
Undue hu-
manity and
irresolution
of the King.¹ Dumont,
343.

first and greatest cause which in France prevented this resistance being opposed to the work of innovation, even when the proper season for it had arrived, and converted the stream of improvement into the cataract of revolution. So strongly was this fatal defect in the monarch's character felt by the wisest men of the popular party in France, that they have not hesitated to ascribe to it the whole miseries of the Revolution.¹ Had a firm and resolute king been on the throne, it is doubtful whether the Revolution would have taken place, or at least whether it would have been attended by such horrors. All the measures of Louis conspired to bring it about; the benevolence and philanthropy which, duly tempered by resolution, would have formed a perfect, when combined with weakness and vacillation, produced the most dangerous, of sovereigns.* His indecision, tenderness of heart, and horror at decided measures, ruined everything; the inferior causes which conspired to bring about the same disastrous result, in some degree, at least, emanated from that source. There were many epochs during the sitting of the first Assembly, after its dangerous tendency began to be perceived by the great body of the people, when an intrepid monarch, aided by a faithful army and resolute nobility, might have averted the tempest, turned the stream of innovation into constitutional channels, and established, in conformity with the wishes of the great majority of the nation, a limited monarchy, similar to that which, for above a century, had given dignity and happiness to the British empire.¹

¹ Dumont,
343.

* "Pison a l'âme simple et l'esprit abattu;
S'il a grande naissance, il a peu de vertu:
Non de cette vertu qui déteste le crime;
Sa probité sévère est digne qu'on estime—
Elle a tout ce qui fait un grand homme de bien,
Mais en un souverain c'est peu de chose ou rien—
Il faut de la prudence, il faut de la lumière,
Il faut de la vigueur adroite autant que fière;
Qui pénètre, éblouisse, et sème des appas.
Il faut mille vertus enfin qu'il n'aura pas."

CORNEILLE, *Othon*, Act ii. scene 4.

The treachery of the troops was the immediate cause of the catastrophe which precipitated the throne beneath the feet of the Assembly ; and the terrible effects with which it was attended, the bloody tyranny which it induced, the ruinous career of foreign conquest which it occasioned, and the national subjugation in which it terminated, are to be chiefly ascribed to the treason or vacillation of these, the sworn defenders of order and loyalty. But for their defection, the royal authority would have been respected, democratic ambition coerced, a rallying point afforded for the friends of order, and the changes which were required confined within safe and constitutional bounds. The revolt of the French Guards was the signal for the dissolution of the bonds of society in France ; and they have been hardly reconstructed, even by the terrible Committee of Public Salvation, and the merciless sword of Napoleon. What the treachery of the army had commenced, the desertion of the nobility consummated. The flight of this immense body, estimated, with their families and retainers, by Mr Burke at seventy thousand persons, completed the prostration of the throne by depriving it of its best defenders. The friends of order naturally abandoned themselves to despair when they saw the army revolting, the crown yielding, and the nobility taking to flight. Who would make even the show of resisting, when these, the leaders and defenders of the state, gave up the cause as hopeless ? The energy of ambition, the confidence arising from numbers, the prestige of opinion, passed over to the other side. A party speedily becomes irresistible when its opponents shrink from the first encounter. Such, then, is the great moral to be drawn from the French Revolution. Its immediate disasters, its bloody atrocities, its ultimate failure, did not arise from any necessary fatality, any unavoidable sequence, but are solely to be ascribed to the guilt of some, the treachery of others, the delusion of all who were concerned in its direction.¹

CHAP.
VI.

1791.

112.
Treachery
of the
troops, and
emigration
of the no-
blesse.¹ Dumont,
347.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE OPENING OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY TO THE
FALL OF THE MONARCHY.—SEPT. 14, 1791.—AUG. 10, 1792.

CHAP.
VII.

1791.

1.
Great ex-
periment in
government
made by the
Constituent
Assembly.

UNIVERSAL suffrage, or a low qualification for electors, has, in every age of democratic excitement, been the favourite object of the people. All men, it is said, are by nature equal ; the superior privileges enjoyed by some are the growth of injustice and superstition, and the first step towards rational freedom is to restore the pristine equality of the species. This principle had been acted upon, accordingly, by the Constituent Assembly. They had given the right of voting for the national representatives to every labouring man of the better sort in France ; and the Legislative Assembly affords the first example, on a great scale, in modern Europe, of the effects of a completely popular election.

2.
Dangers of
universal
suffrage.

If property were equally divided, and the object of government were only the protection of *persons* from injury or injustice, and every man, in whatever rank, were equally capable of judging on political subjects, there can be no question that the claims of the lower orders to an equal share with the higher in the representation would be well founded, because every man's life is of equal value to himself. But its object is not less the protection of *property* than that of persons ; and from this double duty arises the necessity of limiting the right of election

to those interested in the former as well as in the latter of these objects. In private life, men are never deceived on this subject. If a party are embarked in a boat on a stormy sea, there is no need to take any peculiar care of the safety of any of the number. The poor sailor will struggle for his life as hard as the wealthy peer. But very different precautions are required to protect the palace of the latter from pillage, from what are found necessary in the cottage of the former. In the administration of any common fund, or the disposal of common property, it never was for a moment proposed to give the smallest shareholder an equal right with the greatest—to give a creditor holding a claim for twenty shillings, for example, on a bankrupt estate, the same vote as one possessed of a bond for £10,000 ; or to give the owner of ten pound stock in a public company the same influence as one holding ten thousand. The injustice of such a proceeding is at once apparent. The interests of the large shareholders would run the most imminent risk of being violated or neglected by those whose stake was so much more inconsiderable. Universally it has been found, by experience, to be indispensable to make the amount of influence in the direction of any concern be in some degree proportional to the amount of property of which the voter is possessed in it.

In the political world, the supposed or immediate interests of the great body of the people are not only different but adverse to those of the possessors of property. To acquire is the interest of the one ; to retain, that of the other. Agrarian laws, and the equal division of property, or measures tending indirectly to that result, will, in every age, be the wish of the unthinking multitude, who have nothing apparently to lose, and everything to gain, by such convulsions. Their real and ultimate interests, indeed, will in the end inevitably suffer, even more than those of the holders of property, from such changes ; because, being dependent for their subsistence on the wages of labour,

CHAP.
VII.

1791.

3.

Causes to
which they
are owing.

CHAP.
VII.

1791.

they will be the greatest losers by their intermission from the effects of such a convulsion. But that is a remote consequence, which never will become obvious to the great body of mankind. In the ordinary state of society, the superior intelligence and moral energy of the higher orders give them the means of effectually controlling this natural but dangerous tendency on the part of their inferiors. But universal suffrage, or a low franchise, levels all barriers, and reduces the contests of mankind to a mere calculation of numbers. In such a system the vote of Napoleon or Newton, of Bacon or Burke, has no more weight than that of an ignorant mechanic. Representatives elected under such a system are in reality nothing more than delegates of the least informed and most dangerous, but at the same time most numerous portion of the people. Government, constructed on such a basis, is a mere puppet in the hands of an incapable majority. It is the tyranny of mediocrity over talent : for the vast majority of men are always mediocre, and the mediocre are invariably jealous of ability, unless it is subservient to themselves. The contests of party in such circumstances resolve themselves into a mere strife of contending interests, in which the wishes of the majority, however it may be composed, speedily become irresistible. In periods of tranquillity, when interest is the ruling principle, this petty warfare may produce only a selfish system of legislation ; in moments of agitation, when passion is predominant, it occasions a universal insurrection of the lower orders against the higher.

4.
Formation
of the Legis-
lative As-
sembly.

The truth of these observations was signally demonstrated in the history of the Legislative Assembly. By the enactments of its predecessor, the whole powers of sovereignty had been vested in the people. They had obtained what almost amounted to universal suffrage, and biennial elections ; their representatives wielded despotic authority ; they appointed their own magistrates, judges, and bishops ; the military force of the state was in their

hands; their delegates commanded the national guard, and ruled the armies. In possession of such unresisted authority, it was difficult to see what more they could desire, or what pretence could remain for insurrection against the government. Nevertheless, the legislature which they had themselves appointed became, from the very first, the object of their dislike and jealousy; and the history of the Legislative Assembly is nothing more than the preparations for the revolt which overthrew the monarchy. "This," says the republican historian Thiers, "is the natural progress of revolutionary troubles. Ambition, the love of power, first arises in the higher orders; they exert themselves, and obtain a share of the supreme authority. But the same passion descends in society; it rapidly gains an inferior class, until at length the whole mass is in movement. Satisfied with what they have gained, all persons of intelligence strive to stop; but it is no longer in their power, they are incessantly pressed on by the crowd in their rear. Those who thus endeavour to arrest the movement, even if they are but little elevated above the lowest class, if they oppose its wishes, *are called an aristocracy, and incur its odium.*"¹

CHAP.
VII.

1791.

¹ Lac. Pr.
Hist. i. 178.
Th. ii. 7.

Two unfortunate circumstances contributed, from the outset, to injure the formation of the Assembly. These were, the King's flight to Varennes, and the universal emigration of the nobles during the period of the primary elections. The intelligence of the disappearance of the royal family was received in most of the departments at the very time of the election of the delegates who were to choose the deputies. Terror, distrust, and anxiety in consequence seized every breast; a general explosion of the royal partisans was expected; foreign invasion, domestic strife, universal suffering, were imagined to be at hand. Under the influence of these alarms, the primary elections, or the nomination of the electoral colleges, took place. But before these delegates proceeded to name the deputies, the panic had in some degree passed away; the seizure of the King

5.
State of the
country
during the
primary
elections.

June 26.

July 21.

CHAP.
VII.

1791.

had dissipated the causes of immediate apprehension ; and the revolt of the Jacobins in the Champ de Mars had opened a new source of disquietude. Hence the nomination of the deputies was far from corresponding, in all instances, with the wishes of the original electors : the latter selected, for the most part, energetic, reckless men, calculated to meet the stormy times which were anticipated ; the former strove to intersperse among them a few persons who might have an interest in maintaining the institutions which had been formed—the one elected to destroy, the other to preserve. The majority of the deputies were men inclined to support the constitution as it was now established ; the majority of the original electors were desirous of a more extensive revolution, and a thorough establishment of republican institutions.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xii. 14, 37.
Deux Amis,
vi. 337, 342.
Bert. de
Moll. vi. 25,
37. Th. i.
192.

6.
Total want
of property
or decorum
in the new
Assembly,
and danger-
ous prepon-
derance of
young men
in it.

But there was one circumstance worthy of especial notice in the composition of this second Assembly, which was its almost *total separation from the property of the kingdom*. In this respect it offered a striking contrast to the Constituent Assembly, which, though ruled by the Tiers Etat after the pernicious union of the orders, yet numbered among its members some of the greatest proprietors and many of the noblest names in the kingdom. But in the Legislative Assembly there were not fifty persons possessed of £100 a-year. The property of France was thus totally unrepresented, either directly by the influence of its holders in the elections, or indirectly by sympathy and identity of interest between the members of the Assembly and the class of proprietors. The Legislature was composed almost entirely of presumptuous and half-educated young men, clerks in counting-houses, or attorneys from provincial towns, who had risen to eminence during the absence of all persons possessed of property, and recommended themselves to public notice by the vehemence with which, in the popular clubs, they had asserted the principles of democracy. The extreme youth of the greater part of its members was not the least dangerous

of its many dangerous qualities. When the Assembly met, the first impression was, that the whole grey hairs had disappeared. When the president, to form one of the committees, desired the men under twenty-six years of age to present themselves, sixty youths, the most of them of still earlier years, stepped forward. It was easy to see, from the aspect of the faces, that the Assembly was composed of a new generation, which had broken with all the feelings of the past. These young men had, in general, talent sufficient to make them both arrogant and dangerous, without either knowledge profound enough to moderate their views, or property adequate to steady their ambition. So great was the preponderance of this dangerous class in the new Assembly, that it appeared at once in the manner in which the debates were conducted. The dignified politeness which, amidst all its rashness and crimes, the Constituent Assembly had displayed, was no more. Rudeness and vulgarity had become the order of the day, and were affected even by those who had been bred to better habits. Such was the din and confusion, that twenty deputies often rushed together to the tribune, each with a different motion. In vain the president appealed to the Assembly to support his authority, rang his bell, and covered his face with his hat, in token of utter despair. Nothing could control the vehement and vulgar majority. If a demon had selected a body calculated to consign a nation to perdition, his choice could not have been made more happily to effect his object.^{1*}

This deplorable result was, in part at least, owing to the flight of the nobility, so prolific of disaster to France in all the stages of the Revolution. The continued and increasing emigration of the landholders contributed in the

CHAP.
VII.

1791.

¹ Bert. de
Moll. vi. 40,
41. Burke's
Works, vii.
51. Prud-
hom. iv.
118. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. i. 356,
357.

7.
Increased
emigration
of nobles.

* "L'Assemblée Législative fut nommée par une foule de gens sans aveu, courant les villes et les champs, vendant leurs suffrages pour un diner ou un broc de vin. Le corps législatif était plein de gens de cette trempe : Royalistes ou Républicains selon le vent de la fortune : et il faut le dire, quoiqu' à la honte de la Révolution, ce furent là les élémens de la journée du 10 Août."—PRUDHOMME, *Crimes de la Révolution*, iv. 116, 118.

CHAP.
VII.

1791.

¹ Burke,
viii. 72.
Lac. i. 191.

greatest degree to unhinge the public mind ; and proved perhaps, in the end, the chief cause of the subsequent miseries of the Revolution. The number of these emigrants amounted by this time, with their families, to nearly one hundred thousand, of the most wealthy and influential body in France.¹ All the roads to the Rhine were covered by haughty fugitives, whose inability for action was equalled only by the presumption of their language. They set their faces from the first against every species of improvement ; would admit of no compromise with the popular party ; and threatened their adversaries with the whole weight of European vengeance, if they persisted in demanding it. Coblenz became the centre of the anti-revolutionary party ; and to men accustomed to measure the strength of their force by the number of titles which it contained, a more formidable array could hardly be imagined. But it was totally deficient in the real weight of aristocratic assemblies—the number and spirit of their followers. The young and presumptuous nobility, possessing no estimable quality but their valour, and their generous adherence to royalty in misfortune, were altogether unfit to cope with the moral energy and practical talent which had arisen among the middle orders of France. The corps of the emigrants, though always forward and gallant, was too deficient in discipline and subordination to be of much importance in the subsequent campaigns, while their impetuous counsels too often betrayed their allies into unfortunate measures. Except in La Vendée, rashness of advice, and inefficiency of conduct, characterised all the military efforts of the Royalist party in France, from the commencement to the termination of the Revolution.

8.
Its disastrous effects.

In thus deserting their country at the most critical period of its history, the French nobility manifested equal baseness and imprudence : baseness, because it was their duty, under all hazards, to have stood by their sovereign, and not delivered him in fetters to a rebellious people ;

imprudence, because, by joining the ranks of the stranger, and combating against their native land, they detached their own cause from that of France, and subjected themselves to the eternal reproach of bringing their country into danger for the sake of their separate and exclusive interests. The subsequent strength of the Jacobins was mainly owing to the successful appeals which they were always able to make to the patriotism of the people, and to the foreign wars which identified their rule with a career of glory ; the Royalists have never recovered the disgrace of having joined the armies of the enemy, and regained the throne at the expense of national independence. How different might have been the issue of events, if, instead of rousing fruitless invasions from the German states, the French nobility had put themselves at the head of the generous efforts of their own country ; if they had shared in the glories of La Vendée, or combated under the walls of Lyons ! Defeat, in such circumstances, would have been respected, success unsullied ; by acting as they did, overthrow became ruin, and victory humiliation.¹

¹ Madame de Staël, ii. 1, 9.

The new Assembly opened its sittings on the 1st of October. An event occurred at the very outset which demonstrated how much the crown had been deprived of its lustre, and which interrupted the harmony between them and the King. A deputation of sixty members was appointed to wait on Louis ; but he did not receive them, as the ceremonial had not been expected, and merely sent intimation by the minister of justice that he would admit them on the following day at twelve o'clock. The meeting was cold and unsatisfactory on both sides. Shortly after, the King came in form to the Assembly ; he was received with the greatest enthusiasm. His speech was directed chiefly to conciliation and the maintenance of harmony between the different branches of the government. But in the very outset Louis experienced the strength of the republican principles, which, under the fostering hand of the Constituent Assembly, had made

^{9.} Opening of the Legislative Assembly, Oct. 1.

CHAP.
VII.

1791.

Oct. 4.

Oct. 5.

Oct. 6.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xii. 52, 74,
77. Deux
Amis, vi.
337, 341.
Madame
Campan, ii.
169. Mig. i.
147. Th. ii.
18, 19.
Moniteur,
Oc. 7, 1791.

such rapid progress in France. They first decreed that the title of Sire and your Majesty should be dropped at the ensuing ceremonial ; next, that the King should be seated on a chair similar in every respect to that of the president. When the monarch refused to come to the Assembly on these conditions, they yielded that point, but insisted on sitting down when he sat, which was actually done at its opening. The King was so much affected by this circumstance, that when he returned to the Queen he threw himself on a chair, and burst into tears. He was deadly pale, and the expression of his countenance so mournful that the Queen was in the greatest alarm. "All is lost : ah ! madam, and you have beheld that humiliation. Is it this you have come into France to witness ?"¹

10.
General
character of
the Assem-
bly.

Though not anarchical, the Assembly was decidedly attached to the principles of democracy. The court and the nobles had exercised no sort of influence on the elections ; the authority of the first was in abeyance, the latter had deserted their country. Hence the parties in the Legislative Assembly were different from those in the Constituent. None were attached to the royal or aristocratical interests ; the only question that remained was, the maintenance or overthrow of the constitutional throne. "Et nous aussi, nous voulons faire une révolution," said one of the revolutionary members shortly after his election : and this, in truth, was the feeling of a large proportion of the electors, and a considerable portion of the deputies. The desire of novelty, the ambition of power, and a restless anxiety for change, had seized the minds of most of those who had enjoyed a share in the formation of the first constitution. The object of the original supporters of the Revolution had already become, not to destroy the work of others, but to preserve their own. According to the natural progress of revolutionary changes, the democratic part of the first Assembly was the aristocratic of the second. And this appeared, accordingly, even in the places which the parties respectively occupied in the

Assembly ; for the *Côté droit*, or friends of the constitution, was composed of men holding views identical with those who had formed the *Côté gauche*, or democrats, in the Constituent Assembly ; and the *Côté gauche* of the New Assembly consisted of a party so republican, that, with the exception of Robespierre, and a few of his associates in the Jacobin Club, they were unknown in the first.¹

CHAP.
VII.

1791.

¹ Deux
Amis, vi.
341, 343.
Toul. ii. 89.
Lac. i. 192.
Th. i. 10, 11.

The members of the right, or the friends of the constitution, were called the Feuillants, from the club which formed the centre of their power. Lameth, Barnave, Duport, Damas, and Vaublanc, formed the leaders of this party, who, although for the most part excluded from seats in the legislature, by the self-denying ordinance passed by the Constituent Assembly, yet, by their influence in the clubs and saloons, in reality directed its movements. The national guard, the army, the magistrates of the departments, in general all the constituted authorities, were in their interest. But they had not the brilliant orators in their ranks who formed the strength of their adversaries ; and the support of the people rapidly passed over to the attacking and ultra-democratic party. Their principal strength consisted in the extraordinary talents and powerful influence in the intellectual circles of Paris, of a young woman who had already become interwoven with the history of France. The daughter of M. Necker, and his not less gifted wife, the first love of Gibbon, Madame de Stael had inhaled the breath of genius, and lived in the society of talent, from her very earliest years. From her infancy she had heard the conversation of Necker, Rousseau, Buffon, D'Alembert, Diderot, and St Pierre. But it was from nature, not education, that she derived her transcendent powers. Her genius was great, her soul elevated, her feelings impassioned—masculine in energy, but feminine in heart. She was impelled into the career of intellect by the denial by nature of what, she confessed, she would

11.
Parties in
the Assem-
bly—the
Feuillants.
Character of
Madame de
Stael.

CHAP.
VII.

1791.

more have prized—the gift of beauty. By her family she was connected with the popular party ; by her talents, with the aristocracy of intellect ; by her father's rank as minister, and her own predilections as a woman, with that of rank. In the abstract, her principles were entirely for the advocates of freedom ; but, like most other women, her partialities inclined strongly to the elegance of manners, and elevation of mind, which in general are to be found only in connection with ancient descent. Her genius resembled the chorus of antiquity, where all the strong voices and vehement passions of the drama united in one harmonious swell. Her thought was inspiration, her words eloquence, her sway irresistible, to such as were capable of appreciating her powers. Her views of society, and the progress of literature, are more profound than ever, with a few exceptions, were formed by men ; but nevertheless it was not in them that she felt her chief interest, nor in their development that her greatest excellence has been attained. It was in the delineations of the inmost recesses of the heart that she was unrivalled, because none felt with such intensity the most overpowering of its passions. Her great works on Germany and the French Revolution will live as long as the French language ; but the time will never come in any country, that *Corinne* will not warm the hearts of the generous, and refine the taste of the cultivated.¹

¹ Lam. Hist.
des Girond.
i. 341, 342.
Mig. i. 150.

12.
Character of
the Girondists.

The Girondists, so called from the district near Bordeaux called the Gironde, from whence the most able of their party were elected, comprehended the republicans of the Assembly, and represented that numerous and enthusiastic body in the State who longed for institutions on the model of those of antiquity. Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonné, Isnard, and Brissot, were the splendid leaders of that party, and, from their powers of eloquence and habits of declamation, rapidly rose to celebrity. Brissot was at first the most popular of these, from the in-

fluence of his journal, the *Patriote*, in which he daily published to France the ideas which his prodigious mental activity had the preceding evening developed in the meetings of the municipality, in the National Assembly, or in the club of the Jacobins. Condorcet exercised the ascendant of a philosophic mind, which gave him nearly the place which Sièyes had held in the Constituent Assembly ; while Pétion, calm and resolute, and wholly unfettered by scruples, was the man of action of his party, and rapidly acquired the same dominion in the municipality of Paris, of which he was a member, which Bailly had obtained over the middle classes in the commencement of the Revolution. They flattered themselves that they had preserved republican virtue, because they were neither addicted to the frivolities, nor shared in the expenses or the vices of the court ; forgetting that the zeal of party, the love of power, and the ambition of popularity, may produce consequences more disastrous, and corruption as great, as the love of pleasure, the thirst of gold, or the ambition of kings. They were never able, when in power, to get the better of the reproach continually urged against them by the popular party, that they had abandoned their principles, and now, yielding to the seductions of the court, not only embraced the doctrines, but occupied the very places, which had been hitherto held by their antagonists in the Revolution. They fell at last under the attacks of a party composed of men more revolutionary and less humane than themselves, who, disregarding the graces of composition and the principles of philosophy, were now assiduously employed in the arts of popularity, and becoming adepts in the infernal means of exciting the multitude.¹

A passion for general equality, a repugnance for violent governments, distinguished the speeches of the Girondists. Their ideas were often grand and generous, drawn from the heroism of Greece and Rome, or the more enlarged philanthropy of modern times ; their language

CHAP.
VII.

1791.

¹ Deux
Amis, vi.
342, 343.
Th. ii. 11,
13. Hist.
Parl. xii. 34,
36. Mig. i.
151. Dum.
381. Th. ii.
12. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. i. 341.

13.
Their prin-
ciples and
errors.

CHAP.
VII.

1791.

was ever flattering and seductive to the people ; their principles were those which had given its early popularity and immense celebrity to the Revolution. But yet from their innovations sprang the most oppressive tyranny of modern times, and they were at last found joining in many measures of flagrant iniquity. The dreadful war which ravaged Europe for twenty years was provoked by their declamations ; the death of the King, the overthrow of the throne, the Reign of Terror, flowed from the insurrections which they fomented, or the principles which they promulgated. They were too often, in their political career, reckless and inconsiderate. Ambition and self-advancement were their ruling motives ; and hence their eloquence and genius only rendered them the more dangerous, from the multitudes who were influenced by the charm of their language. But they were by no means insensible to less worthy motives, and we have the authority of Bertrand de Molleville for the assertion, that Vergniaud, Brissot, Isnard, Guadet, and the Abbé Fauchet, had all agreed to sell themselves to the court for 6000 francs a-month (£240) to each ; and that the agreement only broke off from the crown being unable or unwilling to purchase their services at so high a price.*

Disappointed thus in their hopes of advancement from the court, the Girondist leaders threw themselves without reserve into the arms of the people, and their influence in that quarter ere long proved fatal both to the King and to themselves. Powerful in raising the tempest, they were feeble and irresolute in allaying it ; invincible

* "Ce même Sieur Durant avait été chargé par M. de Lessart, vers la fin de Novembre 1791, de faire des propositions pécuniaires aux députés Brissot, Isnard, Vergniaud, Guadet, et l'Abbé Fauchet ; et ils avaient tous consenti à rendre au Ministère leur influence dans l'Assemblée à raison de 6000 francs par mois pour chacun d'eux. Mais M. de Lessart trouva que c'était les payer bien cher ; et comme ils ne voulurent rien rabattre de leur demande, cette négociation n'eut aucune suite, et ne produisit d'autre effet que d'aigrir davantage ces cinq députés contre le Ministère."—*Mémoires de BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE*, ii. 355, 356.

in suffering, heroic in death, they were destitute of the energy and practical experience requisite to avert disaster. The democrats supported them as long as they urged forward the Revolution, and became their bitterest enemies as soon as they strove to allay its fury. They were constantly misled, by expecting that intelligence was to be found among the lower orders, that reason and justice would prevail with the multitude; and as constantly disappointed by experiencing the invariable ascendant of passion or interest among their popular supporters,—the usual error of elevated and generous minds, and which so generally unfits them for the actual administration of affairs. Their tenets would have led them to support the constitutional throne, but they were too ambitious to forego elevation for the sake of duty: unable to stem the torrent of democratic fury which they themselves had excited, they were compelled, to avert still greater disasters, to concur in many cruel measures, alike contrary to their wishes and their principles. The leaders of this party were Vergniaud, Brissot, and Roland—men of powerful eloquence, generous philanthropy, and Roman firmness; who knew how to die, but not to live; who perished because they had the passions and ambition to commence, and wanted the audacity and wickedness requisite to complete, a Revolution.¹

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14.

Their fatal
mistake as
to the cha-
racter of
man.¹ Mig. i. 213,
214. Buzot,
84.

The Girondists had no point of assemblage, like the well-disciplined forces of their adversaries; but their leaders frequently met at the parties of Madame Roland,* where all the elegance which the Revolution had left, and all the talent which it had developed, were wont to

15.

Character of
Madame
Roland.

* Manon Jeanne Phlipon, afterwards Madame Roland, was born in Paris in 1754, the daughter of an obscure engraver. She received, nevertheless, like many other women in her rank of life at that period in France, a highly finished education; at four years of age she could read with facility, and she soon after made rapid progress in drawing, music, and history. From the very first she evinced a decided and energetic character, refused to embrace dogmas which did not convince her reason, and hence became early sceptical on many points of the Romish faith in which she was brought up.

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assemble. Impassioned in disposition, captivating in manner, unrivalled in conversation, but masculine in ambition and feminine in temper, this remarkable woman united the graces of the French to the elevation of the Roman character. Born in the middle ranks, her manners, though without the ease of dignified birth, yet conferred distinction on an elevated station ; surrounded by the most fascinating society in France, she preserved unsullied the simplicity of domestic life. She had as much virtue as pride, as much public ambition as private integrity. But she had all a woman's warmth of feeling in her disposition, and wanted the calm judgment requisite for the right direction of public affairs. Her sensitive temperament could not endure the constant attacks made on her husband at the tribune.¹ She interfered too much with his administration, and replied, often with undue warmth, by articles in pamphlets and public

¹ Roland's
Memoirs, i.
32. Mig. i.
165. Th. ii.
63, 64. Lac.
i. 225. Hist.
de la Conv.
i. 39.

She never, however, became irreligious, and retained to the close of life a devout sense both of an all-powerful Creator, and of the fundamental principles of Christianity. Her ardent mind, deeply imbued with liberal principles, at first reverted with enthusiasm to the brilliant pictures of antiquity contained in the ancient writers. She wept that she had not been born a Greek or Roman citizen, and carried Plutarch's Lives, instead of her breviary, to mass. Religious ardour soon after got possession of her mind ; and she entreated her mother to be allowed to take the veil in a convent in the Faubourg St Marceau. Though this was not acceded to by her parents, she entered the convent as a pensionary, and returned from it with a mind enlarged and a heart softened. The elevated reasoning of Bossuet, as she has herself told us, first arrested her attention, and roused her reason ; the eloquence of the *Nouvelle Heloise* soon after captivated her imagination. Indefatigable in study, ardent in pursuit, she devoured alternately books on theology, philosophy, oratory, poetry, and romance ; and became successively a Cartesian, a Jansenist, and a Stoic. She even wrote an essay on a question proposed by the academy of Besançon. In 1780, at the age of twenty-six, she married M. Roland, then an inspector of arts and manufactures at Rouen, who subsequently became Minister of the Interior. She was now in possession of wealth and independence ; and though her marriage with him was a union founded on esteem only, as he was twenty-four years her senior, yet she proved a faithful and affectionate wife. Partly in the line of his profession, and to gain information on the manufactures of foreign countries, partly for pleasure, she travelled much with him in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and England ; and she there entered warmly into her husband's pursuits, and gave him not a little assistance in them by her skill in drawing. He was inspector at Lyons when the Revolution broke out, and, in common with Madame Roland, immediately and warmly embraced its principles. It was the general indignation of the class of society to which they belonged at the invidious exclusions to which they were subjected—exclu-

journals, which bore his name. An ardent admirer of antiquity, she wept, while yet a child, that she had not been born a Roman citizen. She lived to witness misfortunes greater than were known to ancient states, and to bear them with more than Roman constancy.*

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This remarkable woman, by the concurring testimony of all her contemporaries, exercised a powerful influence over the fortunes of her country. More than her husband, even when he was minister of the interior, she directed the royal counsels while he held office, and led the bright band of gifted intellects which assembled in her saloons. The fire of her genius, the warmth of her feelings, the eloquence of her language, enabled her to maintain an undisputed ascendancy even over the greatest men in France. But she was by no means a perfect character. The consciousness of talents tempted her to

16.
Her great
influence
in the As-
sembly.

sions which they were conscious were undeserved—which gave that convulsion its early and irresistible strength. The first occasion on which she openly espoused the popular cause, was in a description of the Federation of Lyons on 30th May 1790, which, from its energy and talent, acquired great celebrity. Attracted by the Revolution, she came to Paris in 1791, and immediately became a constant attender of the debates of the Assembly and at the Jacobin club. Four times a-week a small circle of liberal deputies, consisting of Brissot, Pétion, Buzot, Barbaroux, and others, met at her house, and there, as at cabinet dinners in English administrations, the whole measures of their party were arranged. It was chiefly owing to the sway she thus acquired among the Girondists that her husband was soon after made minister of the interior. Her influence over the minister, however, then appeared excessive, and exposed him to ridicule, her to obloquy. “If you send an invitation,” said Danton, “to Monsieur, you must also send one to Madame: I know the virtues of the minister; but we have need of men who can see otherwise than by the eyes of their wives.”—See ROLAND'S *Memoirs*, i. 272; and *Biographie Universelle*, xxxviii. 460-463.

* She was too active and enterprising for a statesman's wife. “When I wish to see the minister of the interior,” said Condorcet, “I can never get a glimpse of anything but the petticoats of his wife.”—*Hist. de la Convention*, i. 38. It is a curious proof of the manners of the times, that though Madame Roland's deportment as a woman was never suspected, and she died the victim of conjugal fidelity to her husband, who was twenty-four years older than herself, she has left in her memoirs, written in prison, and in the hourly expectation of death, details of her feelings and desires when a young woman—“les besoins,” as she called it, “d'une physique bien organisée”—with which, as Sir Walter Scott has justly observed, a courtesan of the higher class would hardly season her private conversation to her most favoured lover.—See ROLAND'S *Memoirs*, 78-82.

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make too undisguised a use of them ; her obvious superiority to her husband led her to assume, too openly, the lead of him in the direction of political affairs. Vehement, impassioned, and overbearing, she could not brook contradiction, and was often confirmed in error by opposition. Her jealousy of the Queen was extreme, and she often expressed herself in reference to her fall and sufferings in terms of harsh and unfeeling exultation, unworthy alike of her character and situation. Hence she was more fitted, as women eminent in talent generally are, for adversity than for prosperity, and owes her great celebrity chiefly to the extraordinary heroism of her last moments. She lived to lament the crimes perpetrated in the name of liberty, and died a victim to her conjugal fidelity ; evincing, in the last hour, a degree of intrepidity rarely paralleled even in the annals of female heroism, and which, had it been general in the men of her party, might have stifled the Reign of Terror in its birth.¹

¹ Lac. ii. 14,
15. Roland,
i. 18, 19.

17.
Character of
Vergniaud.

Vergniaud * was the most eloquent speaker of the Gironde, but he had not the vigour or resolution requisite for the leader of a party in troubled times. Passion, in general, had little influence over his mind : he was humane, gentle, and benevolent ; difficult to rouse to

* Pierre Victorin Vergniaud was born at Limoges in 1759 ; so that in 1791 he was only thirty-two years of age. His father was an advocate in that town, and bound his son to the same profession, designing him to succeed him in his business there ; but young Vergniaud, being desirous of appearing on a more important theatre, repaired to Bordeaux, where his abilities and power of speaking soon procured him a brilliant reputation, though his invincible indolence prevented him from succeeding in the more thorny, but lucrative branches of his profession. Like all the young barristers of his province, he at once, and with the utmost ardour, embraced the principles of the Revolution ; and he was even remarkable among them for the vehemence of his language, and the impassioned style of his eloquence. He was, however, indolent in the extreme ; fond of pleasure, and, like Mirabeau, passionately desirous of enjoyment ; but when roused, either by his feelings or necessity, he rivalled that great man in the power and influence of his oratory. He had little ambition for himself, but lent himself to the designs of others who were consumed with the desire to raise themselves to the head of affairs. He was chosen one of the deputies for Bordeaux, in 1791, for the Legislative Assembly, and soon rose to eminence by his remarkable oratorical powers.—*Biographie Universelle*, xlviii. 192, 193 (VERGNIAUD).

exertion, and still more to be convinced of the wickedness, either of his adversaries, or of a large portion of his supporters. Indolence was his besetting sin, ignorance of human nature his chief defect. But when great occasions arose, and the latent energy of his mind was roused, he poured forth his generous thoughts in streams of eloquence which never were surpassed in the French Assembly. His oratory was not like that of Mirabeau, broken and emphatic, adapted to the changing temper of the audience he addressed; but uniformly elegant, sonorous, and flowing, swelling at times into the highest strains of impassioned fervour. That such a man should have been unable to rule the Convention, only proves how unfit a body elected as they were is to rule the destinies of a great nation, or a man of such elegant accomplishments to sustain the conflict with a rude democracy.¹

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¹Th. iii. 137,
138.

But the one of all the Girondist party who took the most decided lead in the Assembly was BRISSOT.* Unlike Vergniaud, he was activity itself; and poured forth the stores of an ardent but ill-regulated mind with a profusion which astonished the world, even in those days of universal excitement and almost superhuman exertion.

18.
Brissot. His
character.

* Jean Pierre Brissot was born at Duarville, near Chartres, on the 14th January 1754. His father was a pastrycook, but gave his son a college education, and before he left the seminary where he received it, he had already become an author. A pamphlet he published on the inequality of ranks, in 1775, procured for him a place in the Bastille, from which he was liberated by the influence of Madame Genlis, one of whose maids he soon after married. From thence he was sent to England, on a secret mission from the French police, and afterwards went to America, vainly seeking for some fixed employment; but no sooner did the Revolution break out in France in 1788, than he returned to that country, and immediately began to take an active part in promoting republican principles. After commencing with the publication of several pamphlets, he set up a journal entitled, "Le Patriote Français," which continued to be issued for two years, and acquired a great reputation. This procured for him, on occasion of the Revolution of 14th July, a place in the municipality of Paris—a body then, and still more afterwards, of not less importance than the National Assembly itself. In conjunction with Laclès, of the Orleans faction, he drew up the famous petition of the Champ de Mars, which demanded the dethronement of the King after the journey to Varennes, which procured him a place in the Legislative Assembly, where he became an ardent opponent of Lafayette and the Constitutional party.—See BRISSOT, *Mémoires*, i. 9-213; and *Biog. Univ.* v. 624, 625 (BRISSOT).

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But he was neither a speaker nor a writer of distinguished talent. His style in the Assembly, as well as in his pamphlets, was verbose and monotonous ; his information often scanty or inaccurate ; and he was totally destitute either of philosophic thought or elevation of sentiment. He owed his reputation, which was great, and his influence, which for a considerable time was still greater, to his indefatigable industry, to the prodigious multitude of his pamphlets and speeches, which, by the sheer weight of number, kept him continually before the public ; to his ultra-revolutionary zeal, which rendered him ever foremost in supporting projects of innovation or spoliation ; and to his continual denunciation of counter-revolutionary plots in others, which rendered his journals and pamphlets always an object of curiosity. Like the rest of his party, he was irreligious, with all the political fanaticism which then supplied the place of religion. Calm and imperturbable in manner, he was full of hatred and envenomed feeling in character. Consumed by revolutionary passions, he was superior to the vulgar thirst for money ; and though he had many opportunities of making a fortune, he left his wife and children, when brought to the scaffold by Robespierre, in a state of poverty. He was weak in constitution, ungainly in figure, with a pale countenance, and an affectation of Jacobin simplicity or rudeness of attire. Like many other men of passing celebrity, he was always beneath his reputation, which was in a great degree owing to the abilities of Secretary Girey Dupry, who wrote the best articles in his journals, and shared his fate on the scaffold.¹

¹ Biog.
Univ. v. 624,
625. Mém.
de Brissot,
i. 121, 232.
Mém. de
Condorcet,
i. 179.

19.
Guadet,
Gensonné,
Isnard, Bar-
baroux, and
others.

Guadet was more animated than Vergniaud : he seized with more readiness the changes of the moment, and preserved his presence of mind more completely during the stormy discussions of the Assembly. Gensonné, with inferior talents for speaking, was nevertheless looked up to as a leader of his party from his firmness and resolution of character. Barbaroux, a native of the south of

France, brought to the strife of faction the ardent temperament of his sunny climate ; resolute, sagacious, and daring, he early divined the bloody designs of the Jacobins, but was unable to prevail on his associates to adopt the desperate measures which he soon foresaw would be necessary, to give them anything like an equality in the strife. Isnard, Buzot, and Lanjuinais, were also distinguished men of this illustrious party, who became alike eminent by their oratorical talents and the heroism which they evinced in the extremity of adverse fortune. The elevated feelings, generous character, and pleasing manners of Barbaroux, won the heart, though they never shook the virtue, of Madame Roland. But what they and all the leaders of their party wanted, and which rendered them alike unfit to rule or contend with the Revolution, was a feeling of duty or rectitude on the one hand, and true knowledge of mankind on the other. The want of the first induced them, under the impulse of selfish ambition, to engage in a treasonable conspiracy against the throne, which led to its destruction ; the want of the latter disqualified them from contending, after their common victory, with the associates whom they had summoned up for that criminal enterprise, and at once conducted themselves to the scaffold, and destroyed the last remnants of freedom in France.¹

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¹ Th. iii.
138, 139.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. v.
172.

Very different was the character of the JACOBINS, that terrible faction whose crimes have stained the annals of France with such unheard-of atrocities. Their origin dates back to the struggles in 1789, when, as already noticed, a certain number of deputies from the province of Brittany met in the convent of the Jacobins, formerly the seat of the assemblies of the League, under the name of the "Club Breton." The popularity of this club soon attracted to it the most audacious and able of the democratic party. They seemed to have inherited from their predecessors in the Roman Catholic Church at once their

20.
Picture
of the
Jacobins.

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tyrannical disposition and their arrogant exclusiveness.* The nave of the church was transformed into a hall for the meeting of the members ; and the seat of the president made of the top of a Gothic monument of black marble, which stood against the walls. The tribune, from whence the orators addressed the assembly, consisted of two beams placed across each other, in the form of a St Andrew's cross, like a half-constructed scaffold ; behind it were suspended from the walls the ancient instruments of torture, the unregarded but fitting accompaniments of such a scene ; numbers of bats at night flitted through the vast and gloomy vaults, and by their screams augmented the din of the meeting. Such was the strife of contending voices, that muskets were discharged at intervals to produce a temporary cessation of the tumult. A great number of affiliated societies, in all the large towns of France, early gave this club a decided preponderance : the eloquence of Mirabeau thundered under its roof ; and all the principal insurrections of the Revolution were prepared by its leaders. There the revolts of the 14th July, the 20th June, and the 10th August, were openly discussed long before they took place ; there were rehearsed all the great changes of the drama which were shortly afterwards to be acted in the Assembly. The massacres of 2d September alone appear to have been unprepared by them ; their infamy rests with Danton and the municipality of Paris.¹

¹ Toul. ii. 232, and v. 137. Chateaubriand, Mém. 76.

21.
Composition of the Jacobin club, and tests applied previous to admission.

As usual in democratic assemblies, the most violent and outrageous soon acquired the ascendancy ; the mob applauded those who were loudest in their assertion of the sovereignty of the people. The greater part of its members consisted not of the mere ignorant rabble ; had it been so, it never could have acquired its fatal ascendancy. It was for the most part composed of the most

* " Ils suivent hardiment le vieux dogme — ' Hors de nous, point de salut ! ' Sauf les Cordeliers qu'ils ménagent, dont ils parlent le moins qu'ils peuvent, ils persécutent les clubs, mêmes révolutionnaires." — MICHELET, *Histoire de la Révolution*, ii. 412.

ardent, able, and ambitious of the middle class, to whom the privileges of the highest were most obnoxious, and who were most desirous to occupy their place,—the advocate, or attorney, who was devoured with anxiety to crush the magistrate who had long insulted him by his pride—the village surgeon, anxious to rise to the station of the physician—the priest, who envied the professor or the bishop. The Jacobin Club, at the outset, comprised the quintessence of the professional ambition and talent of France—thence its early and lasting influence. By degrees, however, as the Revolution rolled on—and serious crimes marked its progress—it acquired a darker character, and became distinguished chiefly by the violence of its proceedings, and the concourse from all parts of France of all who were actuated by the fervour or compromised by the crimes of the Revolution. Fifteen hundred members usually attended its meetings; a few lamps only lighted the vast extent of the room; the members appeared for the most part in shabby attire, and the galleries were filled with the lowest of the populace. In this den of darkness were prepared the bloody lists of proscription and massacre; the meetings were opened with revolutionary songs, and shouts of applause followed each addition to the list of murder, each account of its perpetration by the affiliated societies. Never was a man of honour—seldom a man of virtue—admitted within this society; it had an innate horror of every one who was not attached to its fortunes by the hellish bond of committed wickedness. A robber, an assassin, was certain of admission—as sure as the victim of their violence was of rejection. The well-known question put to the entrants, “What have you done to be hanged if the ancient régime is restored?” exemplifies at once the tie which held together its members. The secret sense of deserved punishment constituted the bond of their unholy alliance.¹ Their place of meeting was adorned with anarchical symbols, tricolor flags, and busts of the leading revolu-

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¹ Hist. de la
Conv. i. No.
110, 112.
Duval,
Souv. de la
Terreur, ii.
42, 74.
Mich. Hist.
de la Rév.
ii. 295.

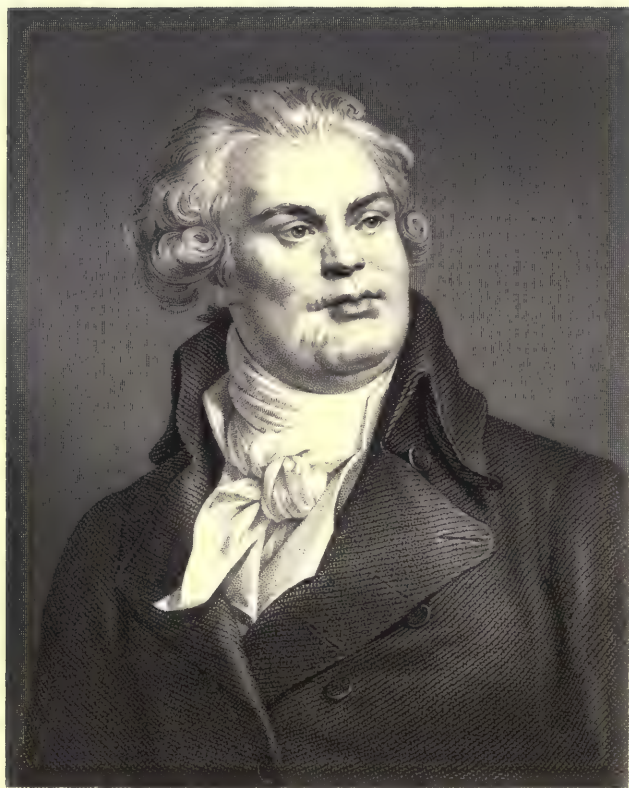
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tionists of former times. Long before the death of Louis XVI., two portraits, adorned with garlands, of Jacques Clément and Ravailac, were hung on the walls ; immediately below was the date of the murder which each had committed, with the words, "He was fortunate ; he killed a king."

22.
The secret
of their
success.

Inferior to their adversaries in learning, eloquence, and taste, they were infinitely their superiors in the arts of acquiring popularity ; they succeeded with the mob, because they knew by experience the means of moving the mass from which they sprang. Reason, justice, humanity, were never appealed to : flattery, agitation, and terror, constituted their never-failing methods of seduction. Incessant fabrications or denunciations of counter-revolutionary plots, and fearful pictures of the dangers to which, if successful, they would expose the whole revolutionary party, were their favourite engines for moving the popular mind. They embraced, and established over all France, a system of espionage as widespread as that of Fouché under the imperial régime—more searching than that of the Inquisition in the plenitude of papal tyranny. Mutual surveillance, public watching, private denunciation, constituted their constant methods of intimidation. More even than Italy in the days of Tiberius, France was, by their agency, overspread with a host of informers, who were only the more formidable that they were at once the accusers, the judges, the jury, and the gainers by denunciation. As strongly as Napoleon himself, and for a similar reason, they felt that conquest was essential to existence ; they were all aware, and constantly maintained, that the Revolution must advance and crush its enemies, or it would recoil and crush themselves. The extreme of democracy was the form of Government which they supported, because it was most grateful to the indigent class on whom they depended ; but nothing was farther from their intentions than to share with others the power which they so



strenuously sought for themselves. The greatest levellers in theory, they became the most absolute tyrants in practice ; having nothing to lose, they were utterly reckless in their measures of aggrandisement ; restrained by no feelings of conscience, they reaped for a time the fruits of audacious wickedness. The leaders of this party were Danton, Marat, Robespierre, Billaud Varennes, St Just, and Collot d'Herbois—names destined to acquire an execrable celebrity in French annals, whose deeds will never be forgotten so long as the voice of conscience is heard in the human heart—who have done more to injure the cause of freedom than all the tyrants who have preceded them.¹

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¹ Toul. v.
139. Lac.
ii. 10. Mig.
i. 214.
Buzot, 72,
84. Hist.
de la Conv.
i. 110, 112.
Chateaub.
Mém. 76.
Mich. Hist.
de la Rév.
ii. 297, 298.

Danton was born at Arcis-sur-Aube on the 28th October 1759. His father was a small proprietor in its neighbourhood, who cultivated his little domain with his own hands, but had sufficient property and intelligence to give his son a good education. He died early, and Danton's mother married M. Recorder, a humble manufacturer, who completed his stepson's education by sending him to Troyes. There his talents were so great, his indolence so invincible, that his companions called him Catiline. Nature seemed to have expressly created him for the terrible part which he played in the Revolution. His figure was colossal, his health unbroken, his strength extraordinary : a countenance ravaged by the small-pox, with small eyes, thick lips, a turned-up nose, a libertine look, but a lofty forehead, at once fascinated and terrified the beholder. A commanding air, dauntless intrepidity, a voice of thunder, soon gave him the ascendancy in any assembly which he addressed. He was bred to the bar, but never got any practice ; and was already drowned in debt when the Revolution in 1789 drew him to Paris, as the great centre of attraction for towering ambition and ruined fortunes. Mirabeau there early discerned his value, and made use of him, as he himself said, "as a huge blast-bellows to inflame the popular passions." In July 1789 he was

23.
Early his-
tory of
Danton.

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already a sort of monarch in the markets ; and he was chosen, on its institution, president of the Club of the Cordeliers, which gave him a durable influence. This celebrated club, which at first rivalled that of the Jacobins in fame and influence, held its sittings in a chapel opposite to the Ecole de Medicine, now used as a museum of surgical preparations and dissecting-rooms. The interior of the chapel was low in the roof, dark, and supported on massy columns. This situation was selected on account of its central situation in the midst of a vast concourse of the working classes, by whom the club was chiefly frequented. It had been built by the monastic order of the Cordeliers, from whence its name was derived ; and in the vaults below the chapel, Marat's printing-press had for some time been established. The Cordeliers was a club of Paris, however, and of Paris alone : it had no correspondence in the provinces ; it was not, like the Jacobins, a revolutionary committee for the direction of all France. Thence its influence, though superior at first, was not so widespread or durable as that of its great and better-organised rival. Danton's commanding voice and ready elocution early gave him the entire command in its debates ; but it had many powerful writers and journalists among its members, who exercised a great, and, in the end, fatal influence on the fortunes of the Revolution. Marat, Camille Desmoulins, Fréron, Fabre d'Eglantine, Robert, and Hébert, were the most remarkable ; and from their incessant flattery of the people, and excitement of their passions, their influence was at first greater with the multitude than that of the Jacobin Club. No precautions were adopted at the Cordeliers against the admission of unaffiliated members : the doors were open to all : and the language ever used by the orators was the re-echo, in exaggerated terms, of the popular passions at the moment. But it wanted the solid support in affiliated societies which rendered the Jacobins so powerful,^{1*} and in the end gave

¹ Biog.
Univ. (Danton.)
Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. ii. 337.

* MICHVET, *Histoire de la Révolution*, ii. 339, 342.

them the entire command of France. Danton then attached himself to Marat, and, in conjunction with him and Brissot, drew up the famous petition of the Champ de Mars, which prayed for the dethronement of the King.

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He was the first leader of the Jacobins who rose to great eminence in the Revolution. Born poor, he had received, as he himself said, no other inheritance from nature than "an athletic form, and the rude physiognomy of freedom." He owed his ascendancy not so much to his talents, though they were great, nor to his eloquence, though it was commanding, as to his indomitable energy and dauntless courage, which made him rise superior to every difficulty, and boldly assume the lead when others, with perhaps equal abilities, were beginning to sink under apprehension. As was said of Lord Thurlow, self-confidence, or, in plainer language, impudence, was the great secret of his success.* At first ambition was the mainspring of his actions, individual gratification the god of his idolatry: situated as he was, he saw that these objects were to be gained only by a zealous and uncompromising support of the popular party, and hence he was a revolutionist. But he was ambitious, not philanthropic; a voluptuary, not a fanatic: he looked to the Revolution as the means of making his fortune, and increasing his pleasures, not of elevating or improving the human race. Accordingly, he was quite willing to sell himself to the Court, if it promised him greater advantages than the popular side; and at one time he received no less than a hundred thousand crowns (£25,000) from the royal treasury, to advocate measures favourable to the interest of the royal authority—an engagement which, as long as it lasted,¹ he faithfully

24.
His character.

¹ Bert. de Moll. Mém. i. 354. Barbaroux, 57. Garat, 175. Mich. Hist. de la Rev. ii. 313 314.

* "A moderate merit with a large share of impudence is more probable to be advanced than the greatest qualifications without it. The first necessary qualification of an orator is impudence, and, as Demosthenes said of action, the second is impudence, and the third is impudence. No modest man ever did or ever will, make his fortune in public assemblies."—LADY M. WORTLEY MONTAGUE, in *Southey's edition of Cowper*, v. 251.

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kept.* But when the cause of royalty was evidently declining, and a scaffold, not a fortune, promised to be the reward of fidelity to the throne, he threw himself without reserve into the arms of the democracy, and advocated the most vehement and sanguinary measures.

25.
His redeem-
ing quali-
ties.

Yet Danton was not a mere bloodthirsty tyrant. Bold, unprincipled, and daring, he held that the end in every case justified the means; that nothing was blamable provided it led to desirable results; that nothing was impossible to those who had the courage to attempt it. A starving advocate in 1789, he rose in audacity and eminence with the public disturbances; prodigal in expense and drowned in debt, he had no chance, at any period, even of personal freedom, but in constantly advancing with the fortunes of the Revolution. Like Mirabeau, he was the slave of sensual passions; like him, he was the terrific leader, during his ascendancy, of the ruling class—though he shared the character, not of the patricians who commenced the Revolution, but of the plebeians who consummated its wickedness. “I have never,” said Madame Roland, “seen anything which characterised so completely the ascendant of brutal passions and unbridled audacity, scarce veiled by an affectation of jovialty and bonhomie. My imagination constantly represented Danton with a poniard in his hand, exciting a troop of assassins; or calling them, like Sardanapalus, to the infamous orgies which were to be the reward of their crimes.” But he had no fanaticism in his character; he was not impelled to evil in the search of good. Self-elevation was his object throughout; when that was secured, he was not inaccessible to better feelings.

* “Par les mains du Sieur Durand, Danton avait reçu plus de 100,000 écus, pour proposer ou appuyer différentes motions au Club des Jacobins; il remplissait assez fidèlement les engagements qu’il prenait à cet égard, en se réservant toujours la liberté d’employer les moyens qu’il jugeait les plus propres à faire passer ses motions; et son moyen ordinaire était de les assaisonner de déclamations les plus violentes contre la Cour et contre les Ministres, pour qu’on ne le soupçonnât pas de leur être vendu.” BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, *Mémoires*, i. 354; LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, i. 139.



Inexorable in general measures, he was indulgent, humane, and even generous, to individuals ; the author of the massacres of the 2d September, he saved all those who fled to him, and spontaneously liberated his personal adversaries from prison. Individual elevation, and the safety of his party, were his ruling objects—a revolution appeared a game of hazard, where the stake was the life of the losing party ; the strenuous supporter of exterminating cruelty after the 10th August, he was among the first to recommend a return to humanity, after the period of danger was past. He was so extravagant during the period of his greatness that he added nothing to his fortune, and left to the two sons whom he left by his first marriage nothing but the humble inheritance of their father at Arcis-sur-Aube. These sons, terrified, like Cromwell's, at the celebrity and fate of their father, retired after his death to their paternal estate, which, like their forefathers, they cultivated with their own hands. They are still unmarried, and the posterity of Danton, like that of many other eminent men, is likely soon to become extinct.¹

¹ Lam. Hist. des Gir. ii. 339; iii. 307. Roland, ii. 14, 17. Mig. i. 201.

Marat was the worst of this band.* Nature had im-

* Jean Paul Marat was born in 1744, at Boudry in the principality of Neuchâtel. He was sprung of Calvinistic parents, and bred to medicine, which he studied at the University of Edinburgh, and in 1774 he published in English, in that city, a pamphlet entitled "The Chains of Slavery." Subsequently he removed to Paris, where he established himself in practice ; but he never succeeded in his profession, and he was soon obliged to accept a humble situation as veterinary surgeon in the stables of the Count d'Artois, which he held for twelve years. He left that service in 1789, and was living in obscure lodgings and great poverty in that city when the Revolution broke out. His learning, however, was considerable, his information extensive, and he had, before that convulsion brought him into notice, already published a great variety of works in different departments of knowledge, which indicated the extent and variety of his studies. Literature, science, philosophy, criticism, had alternately occupied his pen, and attested at once his talents and his perseverance. But from the moment that popular passions got possession of the public mind, he directed the whole force of his intellect to the inflaming of them ; and he rapidly became, in consequence, one of the most powerful as well as dangerous agents of the Revolution. In July 1789 he began his celebrated journal "L'Ami du Peuple," which he continued to publish daily till his death in 1793, and which now forms nineteen volumes, one of the most curious monuments of those fearful times. He soon made himself remarkable in the primary assemblies which everywhere arose in Paris after the insurrection of 14th July, by the vehemence

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26.Biography
and char-
acter of
Marat.

pressed the atrocity of his character on his countenance ; hideous features, the expression of a demon, revolted all who approached him. His talents were considerable, his reading extensive, his industry indefatigable ; and, previous to the Revolution, he had been known by a great variety of writings on different subjects. But that convulsion at once roused all the dark and malignant passions of his nature ; and to such an extent did they obtain the mastery of him, and so strongly was he convinced that they afforded the only passport to success, that he was careful to depict himself in his compositions as worse than he really was. For more than three years his writings incessantly stimulated the people to cruelty ; buried in obscurity, he revolved in his mind the means of augmenting the victims of popular passion. So complete a fanatic had he become, in this respect, that he scrupled not to recommend *torture* to captives, burning at the stake, and branding with red-hot iron, as a suitable means of satisfying the public indignation.* The violence of his language on all occasions was such as would be incredible, if his printed works did not remain an enduring and damning monument to attest it. “When a man,” said he, “is in

mence of his language, and the bloody proscriptions which he from the first, and in the most undisguised manner, advocated. So early as August 1789 he was found there maintaining, that the Revolution would retrograde unless eight hundred deputies in the Assembly were hung on eight hundred trees in the garden of the Tuileries, with Mirabeau at the head of them, as he had ventured to propose that the army should be disbanded, and reconstructed on a new principle. The minister, Malouet, proposed he should be prosecuted for this ; but Mirabeau said, such sallies merited only contempt, and prevailed on the Assembly to pass to the order of the day. The municipality of Paris afterwards ordered him to be arrested, and Lafayette invested his house : but Danton furnished him with the means of escape. Undeterred by these dangers, Marat continued, without intermission, his infernal agitation in his journal, ever keeping a little in advance of the popular feeling, and leading the people on to commit atrocities, by previously accustoming them to hear of them. At first he was hooted down, and hissed at the doors of the clubs and primary assemblies, when he had concluded his sanguinary harangues : but he went on without being deterred either by danger or obloquy, well knowing that the progress of a revolution is ever onward ; and ere long his demands for proscriptions were received with thunders of applause.—See *Biographie Universelle*, xxvi. 556, 560, (MARAT) ; and MICHELET, *Histoire de la Révolution*, ii. 389, 392.

* “Ce n'est pas seulement un jugement sévère, une punition exemplaire, que Marat appella sur ceux qu'il accuse : la mort ne lui suffisait pas. Son imagina-

want of everything, he has a right to tear from his neighbour his superfluities ; rather than perish of famine, he has a right to *murder and devour his quivering flesh*. Whatever disorder such acts may create, it does not more disturb the order of nature than when a wolf tears in pieces a sheep. Pity is entirely a fictitious sentiment : if you never speak to a man of gentleness or mildness, he will never know what they are.”* Nor was falsehood wanting to support these atrocious suggestions ; on the contrary, it was constantly made use of by him, to work the people up to such a state of frenzy as to be ready for their adoption. There was nothing too absurd for him to say, or them to believe, provided it fell in with the prevailing passion of the moment.† In vain repeated accusations were directed against him ; flying from one subterraneous abode to another, he still continued his infernal agitation of the public mind. Terror was his constant engine for attaining his objects. His principle was, that there was no safety but in destroying the whole enemies of the Revolution ; he was repeatedly heard to say, that there would be no security to the State till two hundred and eighty thousand heads had fallen. He was not venal : inveterate fanaticism, the lust of power, the thirst for blood, were his motives of action. The Revolution produced many men who carried into execution more sanguinary measures, none who exercised so powerful an

tion est avide de supplices ; il lui faudrait des bûchers, des incendies, des mutilations atroces. Marquez-les d'un fer chaud, coupez-leur les pouces, fendez-leur la langue,” &c.—MICHELET, *Histoire de la Révolution*, ii. 377 (an ultrarepublican writer). See for an entire confirmation of these remarks, *L'Ami du Peuple*, No. 327, p. 3, 1st Jan. 1791 ; No. 351, p. 8, 25th Jan. 1791 ; No. 305, p. 7, 9th Dec. 1790 ; No. 325, p. 4, 30th Dec. 1790.

* *Projet d'une Constitution*, p. 7 ; MARAT, *sur l'Homme*, i. 165.

† “Lafayette a fait fabriquer dans le faubourg St Antoine quinze mille tabatières qui portent son portrait. Je prie les bons citoyens qui pourront s'en procurer de les briser. On y trouvera, je suis sûr, le mot même du grand complot.”—*L'Ami du Peuple*, No. 319, Dec. 23, 1790. “Louis XVI. pleure à chaudes larmes des sottises que lui fait faire l'Autrichienne.”—No. 320. “La Reine a donné tant de cocardes blanches que le ruban blanc a enchéri de trois sous l'aune. La chose est sûre—Marat la tient d'une fille de la Bertin (marchande de modes à la Reine).”—No. 321, p. 4.

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influence in recommending them. He had that nervous irritability of constitution which in troubled times often produces at once pity for individual suffering and inexorable general cruelty. He said himself, that "he could not without pain see an insect suffer : but he could without scruple annihilate a world." * It was the same with Napoleon and Danton : it is the nature of all fanaticism, whether in religion or politics, to engender such a character. But more than all his compeers, Marat trusted to and advocated blood as the remedy for all evils, the means of overthrowing all opposition, and thence his prodigious and fatal influence. Death cut him short in the midst of his relentless career ; the hand of female heroism prevented his falling a victim to the savage exasperation which he had so large a share in arousing.¹

¹ Barba-
roux, 57.
Garat, 174,
187. Lac. i.
281. Mig. i.
220.

27.
Birth and
early years
of St Just.

ST JUST was born at Decize, in the Nivernois, in 1768, the son of a Chevalier of St Louis, but not noble, who lived near Noyon. He received the elements of his education at Soissons, and was early distinguished by his intense application, and the vehement ardour with which he pursued whatever he undertook. Ambitious of distinction, he embraced the principles of the Revolution, though still a youth, the moment that it broke out ; and so desirous was he of entering on the career of public life that he introduced himself by stealth, in 1791, when under the legal age, to the Electoral Assembly of Chauny, from which he was expelled as soon as the deception was discovered. He afterwards was elected, from the violence of his democratic principles, adjutant-major in a legion of the national guard, and in 1792 was chosen deputy to the Convention for the department of the Aisne. From that time he became an intimate friend of Robespierre, and adopted more thoroughly the principles of that remarkable man than any other member of the Convention.

* "En présence de la nature et de la douleur, Marat devenait très faible ; il ne pouvait, dit-il, voir souffrir un insecte, mais seul avec son écritoire, il eût anéanti le monde."—MICHELET, *Histoire de la Révolution*, ii. 316.

At once an ardent fanatic and a sanguinary despot, St Just, in conjunction with Robespierre, directed his whole efforts to two objects—the destruction of all the enemies of democracy, and the centralisation of all its powers in the hands of a few. He trusted nothing to reason among the people, still less to virtue in public men ; but constantly urged the necessity of destroying all the enemies of the Revolution. Terror was his engine, as the only means either of private safety or national regeneration ; death the means by which it was to be produced. He always maintained, that abuses would never cease as long as the King and a single man of the noblesse lived. “ I insist,” said he, “ that the whole Bourbons should be banished, except the King, who should be kept, *you know why*. Let hatred of kings mingle with the blood of the people.” To excite their rage, he fabricated the most audacious lies, as, that in 1788 Louis XVI. had massacred eight thousand victims in Paris alone, and hung fifteen thousand smugglers, and that the bodies found every morning in the Seine were those of the persons who had been strangled the preceding night in prison by the King’s orders. Falsehood to excite his adherents, death to intimidate his adversaries, were his two weapons, as they are those of all men in the last stages of religious or political fanaticism. Wrapt up in ambition, he was above the sordid desire of wealth, but not insensible to other passions. He loved women, had an elegant figure, and affected the ancient polish of manners ; but a dark melancholic countenance, and a profusion of lank black hair, revealed at once to the spectator the unrelenting fanatic of the nineteenth century.¹

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28.
His character.

¹ Biographie Universelle, xxxix. 604, 609. (St Just.)

But all the leaders of the Jacobins sink into insignificance before their ruler and despot, FRANCIS MAXIMILIEN ROBESPIERRE. This extraordinary man, whose name will never be forgotten, was born at Arras in 1759, the son of an obscure procurator in that town, who, being ruined by dissipation, had fled to Cologne to avoid his creditors,

29.
Early years and education of Robespierre.

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in which he set up a French school ; and who removed from thence to America, where he was never more heard of. His mother, Marie Josephine Caneau, the daughter of a brewer, died, when Maximilien was only nine years of age, leaving her young family totally destitute. Young Robespierre was succoured in this extremity by the Bishop of Arras, who procured for him a bursary at the College of Louis le Grand at Paris, and paid for his board there, while the Abbé Proyart, its principal, received him in the kindest manner. His progress in classical knowledge was respectable, and he is marked, from the year 1772 to 1775, as one of the most promising students of the college. On leaving that seminary he studied law, and set up as an advocate in his native town of Arras ; but his success was not remarkable, as the turn of his mind was always towards principle and speculation rather than business. Ardent in the pursuit of these, his earliest expedition from college was to make a pilgrimage on foot of thirty miles to see Rousseau, at Ermonville, then the object of his most enthusiastic admiration. Having been appointed a member, by the Bishop, of the criminal tribunal of Arras, he suffered so much pain on being obliged to condemn an assassin to death, that he resigned the situation.¹

¹ Robespierre, Mém. i. 204, 206. Biog. Univ. xxxviii. 232, 233. Mich. Hist. de la Rév. ii. 319.

30.
His prize essay at Metz in 1784.

His first appearance in public was still more remarkable, considering the career which ultimately awaited him. The academy of Metz having, in 1784, proposed a prize for the best essay on an existing law in France, which affixed to his whole family the infamy of a criminal's condemnation to the scaffold, Robespierre engaged in the competition and carried off a prize of four hundred francs for his composition. He was strongly urged to try his fortune by a young friend destined to future celebrity, and who afterwards became his colleague in the Committee of Public Salvation—Carnot.* Carried away by the philan-

* “ ‘Eris,’ me dit-il (Carnot), ‘avec toute l’ardeur de ton âme patriotique : grave en lettres de sang les vérités que tu vas dire à tes concitoyens ; et arrache

thropic feelings then so generally prevalent, which ushered in, in such deceitful colours, the dawn of the Revolution, Robespierre went a step further, and eloquently contended for *the total abolition of capital punishments in all cases*. Thus the most sanguinary despot known in modern times owed his education, and preservation from destitution, to the benevolence of two kind-hearted ecclesiastics; he made his first pilgrimage as a youth to see the celebrated philanthropist, J. J. Rousseau; he resigned his first judicial appointment from the pain he suffered on pronouncing sentence of death on a murderer; and made his first appearance in life by an essay in which he eloquently contended for the abolition, in all cases, of capital punishments.^{1*}

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¹ Robespierre, Mém. i. 239. Biog. Univ. xxxviii. 233. Mich. Hist. de la Rev. ii. 319.

The first cause in which Robespierre gained any distinction was one against the sheriffs of St Omer, in which he pronounced a glowing eulogium on the virtues and patriotism of Louis XVI., of whom he was hereafter to be the cruellest enemy; and soon after he acquired a great reputation with the popular party, by a violent memorial against the superior council of Artois. This procured for him a place in the States-General in 1789, from which period his biography is written in the annals of France. When he first entered the Assembly, however, he had so little the command of language, that it

31.
His first appearance in public life.

au moins une victime à cet affreux préjugé—tu seras bien payé.’—*Mémoires de ROBESPIERRE*, i. 239.

* Robespierre’s motto for this Essay was the line of Virgil—

“Quid hoc genus hominum? quæve hunc tam barbara morem
Permittet patria?”

Lacretelle wrote an article in the *Mercure de France* on this composition when it appeared, in which he bestowed on it the highest commendations. “Son ouvrage,” said he, “sera lu avec intérêt, et obtiendra une attention honorable.—Il est rempli de vues saines et de traits d’une éloquence simple, d’un talent heureux et vrai. On en concevra encore plus d’espérances, quand on saura que l’auteur, voué à la profession d’avocat, plaide sa première cause dans le temps où il écrivait ce discours.”—*Mercure de France*, Sept. 29, 1784, in *Mémoires de Robespierre*, i. *Pièces Just.* B, p. 229.

In this Essay Robespierre observed, speaking of the family of a condemned criminal:—“Avec l’innocence ils ont encore les droits les plus touchants à la commisération de leurs concitoyens. C’est, par exemple, une famille désolée, à qui l’on arrache son chef et son appui pour le traîner à l’échafaud: on juge qu’elle serait trop heureuse si elle n’avait que ce malheur à pleurer—on la dévoue elle-même à un opprobre éternel. Les infortunés!—avec toute la

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was with difficulty he could put a few words together. The Abbé Maury on one occasion made the whole members laugh by the ironical proposal that his speech should be printed. It was only by indomitable and indefatigable perseverance that he surmounted these defects, and at length acquired the power of ready elocution. In those days he was miserably poor, lodged in an obscure room in the Rue du Saintonge in the Marais, and dined at sixpence a-day. The Assembly having ordered a general mourning for the death of Franklin, the future dictator of France had no resource but to borrow a coat so much too large for him that the whole Assembly burst into laughter when he appeared in it.* Still he adhered to his repugnance to the shedding of blood, and was found in 1791 warmly and eloquently supporting, in the National Assembly, a proposal for the total abolition of capital punishments.† He was not re-elected into the Legislative Assembly, in consequence of the self-denying ordinance, which he himself had passed; but he was an active member of the Jacobin Club during all the time of its sitting, and in that way exercised an unseen but most effective control, both over the proceedings of that Assembly and the dreadful catastrophe which at its close overturned the throne.¹

¹Biog. Univ.
xxxviii. 232,
233. Mich.
Hist. de la
Rev. ii. 323.

sensibilité d'une âme honnête, ils sont réduits à soutenir tout le poids de cette peine horrible, que le scélérat peut seul soutenir. Ils n'osent plus lever les yeux, de peur de lire le mépris sur le visage de tous ceux qui les environnent : tous les dédaignent ; tous les corps les repoussent ; toutes les familles craignent de se souiller de leur alliance ; la société entière les abandonne, et les laisse dans une solitude affreuse. L'amitié même ne peut exister pour eux. Enfin, leur situation est si terrible, qu'elle fait pitié à ceux mêmes qui en sont les auteurs : on les plaint du mépris qu'on sent pour eux, et on continue de les flétrir ; on plonge le couteau dans le cœur de ces victimes innocentes, mais ce n'est pas sans être un peu ému de leurs cris. Le cri maternel, les prières de l'innocence, les supplications de la beauté, l'intéressante voix de l'amitié, les services, les vertus, les talents — tout ce qui peut émouvoir le cœur de l'homme est employé contre le cours de la justice. On est plus consterné de la vengeance que du crime. D'où vient de si grands désordres ? C'est que la punition est plus à craindre que le crime." — *Essai de ROBESPIERRE*, 1784 ; *Mémoires de ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 320, 331.

* "Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se

Quam quod ridiculos homines facit." — JUVENAL, iii. 154.

† *Ante*, Chap. VI. § 75.

Of all the characters which the Revolution produced, Robespierre was by far the most remarkable, and without the details now given of his previous life, his character would be altogether inexplicable. No one has been so much disfigured in representation and description by contemporary annalists of every kind—a peculiarity not to be wondered at, considering that he nearly destroyed them all, and had wellnigh succeeded, before his fall, in guillotining the greatest and most eminent men of all parties in France. But a calm retrospect of his career will at once show to what his extraordinary rise and long-continued power was owing, and reconcile the otherwise incomprehensible contradictions of his character.

Robespierre was a great, nay, in some respects, he was a good man ; but he was a sanguinary bigot, a merciless fanatic. His talents were of the very highest order ; his eloquence, after by practice and perseverance he had acquired the command of language, was condensed, his reasoning powerful, his intellect cool, his sagacity great, his perseverance unconquerable. His disposition was of that peculiar kind which affords the only sure foundation for lasting popularity with the people. He adhered steadily to principle, and constantly appealed to it. There was no shuffling or tergiversation about him ; he was ever the same. His doctrines were simple, flattering to the many, and perfectly adapted to every capacity. He maintained that the multitude can do no wrong : “*que le peuple est toujours bon, le magistrat toujours corruptible* ;”^{*} that they are the fountain of all power, and that by their delegates alone it should ever be exercised. It was to effect this object that he strove to destroy all the higher classes of society, because he was convinced it would not be attained otherwise ; but his ultimate object was equality and social happiness. Philosophers and statesmen will probably be inclined to dispute these first principles, and deduce many arguments against them from his own

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32.
His character has been disfigured by his contemporaries.

33.

His character and principles.

^{*} His own words.—BUONAROTTI, *Conspiration de Babeuf*, i. 273.

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career ; but none can deny to Robespierre the merit of having steadily adhered to them in his reasonings, and followed them out with invincible constancy in his conduct. Adopting the prevailing doctrine of the day, that the end will justify the means, he went steadily on destroying every one who thwarted the popular will,—of which he considered himself, and with reason, as the true incarnation,—till he had wellnigh annihilated the whole intellect and virtue of France. Napoleon did not prosecute savage warfare for the external glory of the republic with more vigour and perseverance, than Robespierre did internal massacre to exterminate its domestic enemies ; and the extraordinary success and long-continued power of both proved that each had rightly judged the popular mind in his own day—that they both marched, as Napoleon said, “with the opinion of five millions of men.” No man in troubled times ever rose to lasting greatness but by steady and courageous adherence to principle. In this view Robespierre’s character and career possess an interest and an importance far beyond what can belong to any individual, how eminent soever. He was the incarnation of a principle, the touchstone of a system. And that principle was the natural innocence of man—that system, to do evil that good may come of it.

31.
His personal
appearance
and weak-
nesses.

Although, however, the public career of Robespierre was thus the manful assertion of a principle, and its results a *reductio ad absurdum* of its doctrines ; yet a close examination reveals in him, in addition to his unrelenting cruelty, many of the weaknesses, some of the littlenesses, of humanity. Unlike Mirabeau and Danton, he owed nothing to physical strength, or the ascendant of manner. Ungainly in appearance, with a feeble voice and vulgar accent, he owed his elevation chiefly to the inflexible obstinacy and dauntless moral courage with which he maintained his opinions, at a time when the popular cause had lost many of its supporters. But under the mask of patriotism was concealed the working of other and less

worthy feelings. Vanity, terror, and revenge exercised a powerful influence over his mind. His hatred was implacable ; it fell with unmitigated fury on his nearest and dearest relations.* Cautious in conduct, slow but implacable in revenge, he avoided the perils which proved fatal to so many of his adversaries, and ultimately established himself on their ruin. Insatiable in his thirst for blood, he disdained the more vulgar passion for money : no bribes from the Court ever sullied his hands ; at a time when he disposed of the life of every man in France, he resided in a small apartment, the only luxury of which consisted in numerous images of his figure, and several mirrors which in every direction reflected his form. While the other leaders of the populace affected a squalid dress and dirty linen, he alone appeared in elegant attire, like that of the ancient régime. His countenance had something in it which was repulsive ; he was pale, inclining to a livid hue, and was deeply marked by the small-pox. His smile was painful, and at times satanic ; a convulsive quiver of the lips, whenever he was strongly agitated, often gave a frightful expression to his countenance. An austere life, a reputation for incorruptibility, a total disregard of human suffering, preserved his ascendancy with the fanatical supporters of liberty, even though he had little in common with them, and though there was an elevation of purpose in his cruelty to which they were strangers. He had great designs in view in the reconstruction of the social edifice, after three hundred thousand heads had fallen. His visions were of an innocent republic, with equal fortunes arising out of the sea of blood. But it was in general measures only that he was philanthropic ; to individuals he was merciless and cruel in the extreme. He was more consistent than Danton, but less humane : he never aban-

* “ Que cette passion de la haine doit être affreuse, puisqu'elle vous aveugle au point de me calomnier auprès de mes amis. *Votre haine pour moi est trop aveugle pour ne pas se porter sur tout ce qui me témoignera quelque intérêt.*” — *La Citoyenne ROBESPIERRE à son frère*, 18 Mess., Ann. 2. *Papiers Inédits trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 114.

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doned a principle, but he never saved a friend. It was hard to say whether his supporters or his enemies fell fastest beneath the scythe of his ambition. His terrible career is a proof how little, in popular commotions, even domineering vices are ultimately to be relied on; and how completely indomitable perseverance, and a steady adherence to popular principles, can supply the want of all other qualities. The approach of death unveiled his real weakness; he was the perfection of moral courage, but not equally distinguished by personal firmness. When success was hopeless, his boldness deserted him; and the assassin of thousands met his fate with a vacillation that could hardly have been expected from his previous career.¹

¹ Roland, i.
298. Barba-
roux, 63, 64.
Mig. i. 217.
Hist. de la
Conv. i. 74.
Barère,
Mém. i. 116.

35.
Club of the
Jacobins.

The leaders of the Jacobins in the Legislative Assembly were Chabot, Bazire, and Merlin; but it was not there that their real influence lay. The clubs of the Jacobins and the Cordeliers were the pillars of their authority; in the first, Robespierre, Billaud Varennes, and Collot d'Herbois, ruled with absolute sway; the latter was under the dominion of Danton, Carrier, Desmoulins, and Fabre d'Eglantine. Robespierre was excluded from the Assembly by the self-denying ordinance which he himself had proposed; but he had acquired an omnipotent sway at the Jacobins', by the extravagance of his opinions, the condensed energy of his language, and his reputation for integrity, which had already acquired for him the surname of the Incorruptible. The extensive galleries, erected round the hall of the Assembly, gave the most unruly and violent of their body constant access to the Legislature, where they never failed to cheer on their own partisans as loudly as they drowned by clamour the few remaining friends of order or regular government. In the Faubourg St Antoine, the Brewer Santerre, well known in the bloodiest days of the Revolution, had obtained an undisputed ascendancy; while the municipality of Paris, elected according to the new system, by the universal suffrage of the inhabitants, had fallen, as

might have been anticipated, into the hands of the most violent and least respectable of the demagogues. The importance of this body was not at first perceived ; but possessing, as it did, the means of rousing at pleasure the strength of the capital, it soon acquired a preponderating influence, and was enabled to enthral a government which the armies of Europe sought in vain to subdue.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xii. 72, 74.
Mig. i. 152.
Th. ii. 13, 15.
Toul. ii. 93.

It is admitted by the republican writers, that at this period the King and Queen were sincerely inclined to support the constitution.² In truth, Louis had great hopes of its success ; and though he was not insensible to its faults, and desired its modification in several particulars, yet he trusted to time, and the returning good sense of the nation, to effect these changes, and was resolved to give it a fair trial. The Queen participated in the same sentiments, and, from the comparative tranquillity of the last year, began to entertain sanguine hopes that the anarchy of the nation might at length be stilled. The establishment of the Constitutional Guard, eighteen hundred strong, for the service of the palace, since the King had accepted the constitution, gave them the shadow at least of independence. Louis's ministers were far, however, from entertaining such sanguine sentiments ; and Bertrand de Molleville, in particular, strongly expressed to him his opinion in private, that the royal prerogative was so abridged, under the new constitution, that it could not possibly exist for any length of time.—“ M. Bertrand,” replied the simple-hearted monarch, “ there are many things in the constitution which I have endeavoured to prevent—which I would wish to see altered ; but the time for that is past : I have sworn to maintain it, and maintain it I will. Nay, I am convinced that a sincere and honest endeavour to abide by it, in all respects, is the best way to open the eye of the nation to its defects. Courage, M. Bertrand !—all may yet be well.”³

36.
Views of the
King at this
period.
² Th. ii. 365.

³ Campan.
ii. 261.
Bert. de la
Moll. vi. 22,
23.

The constitution having vested in the King the power of raising a guard for the protection of his person and

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37.

Formation
of the con-
stitutional
guard of the
King.

family, he commenced, soon after the meeting of the Legislative Assembly, the formation of it. This was a matter of extreme delicacy, for both the national guard and the people of Paris were excessively jealous of the influence, all but unbounded, which they had long enjoyed by the possession of the King's person, and viewed with undisguised aversion any measures which might even tend to render him independent of them. In the hope of reconciling all difficulties, and at the same time taking advantage of the revived sentiments of loyalty which had been awakened in the rural districts, especially of the south and west of France, Louis determined to have the National and Constitutional Guards always in equal numbers in the service of the palace, and to choose the latter from the provinces, in the proportion of three or four from each department. This plan was well-conceived in appearance, from the obvious justice on which it was founded; but, like all other conciliatory measures attempted during a period of general excitement, it discontented both parties. It was soon discovered that, though it contained several violent revolutionists, sent from the departments having that tendency, the great majority of the Constitutional Guard was faithful to the King; and old Marshal Brissac, its commander, was so in a remarkable degree. It excited, in consequence, from the very first, the most violent jealousies in the National Guard of Paris, inso-much that an insurrection among the latter would infallibly have broken out, if the King had not constantly admitted them to the interior service of the palace, and used his utmost efforts with the officers on both sides to preserve a good understanding between them. But the reconciliation was seeming only, and the discord ere long broke out, with fatal effects to the King and the whole royal family.¹

¹ Bert. de
Moll. Mém.
i. 153, 145.
Deux Amis,
vi. 341, 350.

The first serious contest of the new Assembly was with the emigrants and the clergy. By one flagrant act of injustice, the Constituent Assembly had left the seeds of

permanent discord between the revolutionary party and the church. The sufferers naturally were indefatigable in their endeavours to rouse the people to support their cause. The bishops and priests exerted all their influence to stimulate the country population ; and they succeeded, especially in the western provinces, in producing a most powerful sensation. Circular letters were despatched to the *curés* of the parishes, and instructions generally transmitted to the people. The constitutional clergy were there represented as irregular and unholy ; their performance of the sacraments impious and nugatory ; marriage by them as nothing but concubinage ; divine vengeance as likely to follow an attendance on their service. Roused by these representations, the rural population in the districts of Calvados, Gévaudan, and La Vendée, broke into open disturbances.¹

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38.

Vehement
discontent
of the
church.

Oct. 6.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xii. 77, 93.
Deux Amis,
vi. 357, 359.
Ferrières,
Mém. i. 32.

Brissot proposed to take instant and vigorous measures with the dissident clergy and refractory emigrants. “ Every method of conciliation,” said Isnard, “ with these classes is useless : what effect has followed all your former indulgence towards them ? Their audacity has risen in proportion to your forbearance : they will never cease to injure till they lose the power of doing so. They must either be conquerors or conquered—matters have fairly come to that ; and he must be blind indeed who does not see this in the clearest light.” “ The right of going from one country to another,” said Brissot, “ is one of the inherent rights of man ; but the right ceases when it becomes a crime. Can there be a more flagrant offence than that of emigrating, for the purpose of bringing on our country the horrors of foreign war ? What other object have the crowds who now daily leave France ? Hear their menaces, examine their conduct, read their libels, and you will see that what they call honour is what the universal voice of mankind has condemned as the height of baseness. Can we be ignorant that at this moment the cabinets of Europe are

39.

Argument
of Brissot
and others
against the
emigrants.
Oct. 26.

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VII.

1791.
1 Hist. Parl.
xii. 163, 174.
Lac. Pr.
Hist. i. 266.
Ferrières, i.
32. Mig. ii.
155. Th. ii.
274.

40.
Answer of
the Consti-
tutionalists.

besieged by their importunity, and possibly preparing to second their entreaties? Confidence is every day sinking; the rapid fall of the assignats renders nugatory the best-devised plans of finance. How is it possible to put a curb on the factions of the interior, when we suffer the emigrants to escape with impunity, who are about to bring the scourge of foreign war upon all our homes?"¹

The constitutional party could not deny the justice of these alarms, but they strove to moderate the severity of the measures which were proposed to be adopted against the emigrants. "We are about," said Condorcet, "to put the sincerity of the King to too severe a trial, if we require him to adopt measures of severity against his nearest relations. Foreign powers can hardly be convinced that he really enjoys his freedom; and is it by his consenting to such an act that their doubts are to be removed? What will be the effect of the extreme measures which are proposed? Are they likely to calm the passions, soothe the pride, or heal the wounds which have been inflamed? They will bring back few of the absent, irritate many of the present. Time, distress, the frigid hospitality of strangers, the love of home, a sense of our justice, must be the means of restoring the love of their country in their bosoms: by the proposed measures you will extinguish it. The Constituent Assembly, more wise than ourselves, beheld with contempt those assemblages of discontented spirits on the frontier, who would be more truly formidable if exercising their spleen at home. A signal of alarm so sounded by us will at once excite the jealousy of all the European powers, and really bring on those foreign dangers which would never have arisen from the supplications of our nobility. The pain of confiscation is odious in the most tyrannical states; what must it be considered in a nation exercising the first rights of freedom? Are all the emigrants culpable in an equal degree? How many has fear rendered exiles from their country? Are you now to proclaim to the world

that these fears were well founded, to justify their desertion of France, and to demonstrate to mankind that the picture they have drawn of our government is nowise overcharged? Let us rather prove that their calumnies were unfounded, and silence their complaints by pursuing a conduct diametrically opposite to that which they anticipate.”¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xii. 173, 218.
Lac. i. 207.

The Assembly, influenced by the pressing dangers of emigration, disregarded all these considerations. Two decrees were passed, the first of which commanded the King's brother, the heir-apparent to the regency during the minority of the Dauphin, to return to France, under pain of being held to have abdicated his eventual right to the regency; while the second declared all the French without the kingdom engaged in a conspiracy against the constitution; and subjected all those who should not return before the 1st of January to the penalty of *death and confiscation of their estates*, under reservation of the rights of their wives, children, and creditors. This proceeding on the part of the French Assembly cannot be better characterised than in the words of the eloquent author of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, who cannot be suspected of undue prejudice against the Revolution. “Examples of this kind,” says Sir James Mackintosh, “are instances of that reckless tyranny which punishes the innocent to make sure of including the guilty, as well as of that refined cruelty which, after rendering home odious, perhaps insupportable, pursues with unrelenting rage such of its victims as fly to foreign lands.”²

41.
Decree
against the
emigrants.
Oct. 31.

Nov. 9.

² Mackin-
tosh's Eng-
land, iii. 162.
Mig. i. 156.
Lac. i. 208.
Th. ii. 24.
Hist. Parl.
xii. 207, 208,
218.

The disposal of the refractory clergy was the next question which occupied the Assembly: it excited debates more stormy than those on the emigrants, in proportion as religious rancour is more bitter than civil dissension. “What are you about to do?” exclaimed the advocates of the clergy. “Are you, who have consecrated the freedom of worship, to be the first to violate it? The declaration of the rights of man places it on a basis even more

42.
Argument
in favour of
the clergy in
the Assem-
bly.
Nov. 11.

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solemn than the constitution ; and yet you seriously propose to subvert it ! The Constituent Assembly, the author of so much good to France, has left this one schism as a legacy to its successors : close it, for God's sake ; do not widen the breach. To refuse an oath from a sense of duty can never be blamable ; to take it from a desire of gain is alone disgraceful. Shall we deprive those, who decline from conscientious scruples, of the slender subsistence which they enjoy ? Destroyers of political inequality, shall we re-establish a distinction more odious than any, by crushing to the dust a meritorious class of men ? Who shall guarantee ourselves from similar spoliation, if we reduce to beggary the earliest supporters of the Revolution, those who first joined our standard after the immortal oath in the Tennis Court ? Beware of driving to desperation a set of men still possessing extensive influence over the rural population. If you are dead to every sentiment of justice, yet pause before you adopt a measure so likely to awaken the flames of civil war among ourselves.”¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xii.129, 134.

43.
Severe decrees against
the clergy.
Nov. 5.

But the days of reason and justice were past. The leaders of the popular party all declared against the priests. Even Condorcet, the advocate of freedom of worship, was the first to support the violent measures proposed against them. It was decreed that all the clergy should be ordained instantly to take the oath to the constitution, under pain of being deprived of their benefices, and declared suspected of treason against the State. They were ordered to be moved from place to place, to prevent their acquiring any influence over their flocks, and imprisoned if they refused to obey. On no account were they to exercise any religious rites in private. Such was the liberty which the Revolution had already bestowed upon France—such its gratitude to its first supporters.² The adoption of these severe and oppressive enactments was signalised by the first open expression of irreligious or atheistical sentiments in the

² Hist. Parl.
xii.129, 157.
Moniteur,
7th Nov.
Lac. ii. 209.
Mig. ii. 156.

Assembly. "My God is the Law—I acknowledge no other," was the expression of one of the opponents of the church. The remonstrance of the constitutional bishops had no effect. These and similar expressions were loudly applauded, and the decree was carried in the midst of tumult and acclamation.

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When these acts were submitted, agreeably to the constitution, to the King for his consideration, he sanctioned the first decree against his brother, and the emigrants, but put his veto upon the last, and the one against the priests. He had previously and openly censured the Count d'Artois's desertion of the kingdom, and his disapproval of the general emigration of the noblesse was well known to all parties, for on the 14th October he had issued a pressing proclamation, urging them, in the strongest manner, to return ;* but he was unwilling to give his sanction to the extreme measures which were now meditated against them. It was proposed in the council that, to pacify the people, whom it was well known the exercise of the veto would exasperate, the King should dismiss all his religious attendants, excepting those who had taken the oaths to the constitution ; but to this Louis, though in general so flexible, opposed an invincible resistance, observing, that it would ill become those who had declared the right of every subject in the realm to liberty of conscience, to deny it to the sovereign alone. In acting thus firmly, he was supported by a large portion of the constitutional party, and by the directory of the department of Paris ; and he stood much in need of their adhesion, in thus coming to open rupture with the people and the legislature. The announcement

44.
The King
refuses to
sanction
these de-
crees.
Nov. 11.

* " Français qui avez abandonné votre patrie, revenez dans son sein ; c'est là qu'est le poste d'honneur ; parcequ'il n'y a de véritable honneur qu'à servir son pays et à défendre les lois. Venez leur donner l'appui que tous les bons citoyens leur doivent : elles vous rendront à leur tour ce calme et ce bonheur que vous cherchiez en vain sur une terre étrangère. Revenez donc, et que le cœur cesse d'être déchiré entre ses sentimens qui sont les mêmes pour tous, et les devoirs de la Royauté qui l'attachent principalement à ceux qui suivent la loi."—*Proclamation de Louis XVI. aux Emigrés*, 14 Oct. 1791 ; *Hist. Parl.* xii. 160, 162.

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Nov. 12.
¹ Hist. Parl.
 xii. 221, 223.
 Moniteur,
 13th Nov.
 Deux Amis,
 vi. 360, 372.
 Lac. i. 211.
 Mig. ii. 157.
 Th. ii. 30,
 31.

of the King's refusal was received with very different feelings by the different parties in the Assembly. The republicans could not disguise their satisfaction at a step which promised to embroil him still further with the nation, and to give to their ambitious projects the weight of popular support. They congratulated the ministers in terms of irony on the decisive proof they had now given of the freedom of the throne. On the following morning, a severe proclamation from Louis appeared against the emigrants. The Feuillants animadverted upon it as an unconstitutional stretch of prerogative; the Jacobins, as too indulgent in its expressions.¹

45.
 Election of
 a Mayor of
 Paris.
 Nov. 17.

The choice of a mayor for the city of Paris, in the room of Bailly, whose period of holding that dignity had expired, shortly after occupied the attention of the capital. Lafayette had retired from the command of the national guards, and was a candidate for that dignity. He was supported by the constitutionalists; while Pétion, the nominee of the now united Girondists and Jacobins, was the favourite of the people. The Court, jealous of Lafayette, who had never ceased to be an object of dislike, especially to the Queen, since the 5th October, had the imprudence to throw the influence of the crown into the scale for Pétion, and even to expend large sums of money for that purpose. "M. Lafayette," said the Queen, "aspires to the mayoralty, in the hope of soon becoming a mayor of the palace; Pétion is a Jacobin and a republican, but he is a fool, incapable of rendering himself the head of a party." Pétion accordingly was elected, and gave the whole of his influence to the Revolutionists. The majority which Pétion obtained on this occasion, by the coalition of the whole democratic party, was immense, and showed in a decisive manner the vast preponderance which the democrats, who were carrying on the Revolution, had already acquired over the constitutionalists who commenced it; for Pétion had 6708 votes—Lafayette only 3125.²

² Hist. Parl.
 xii. 330.
 Moniteur,
 20th Nov.
 1791. Mig.
 i. 153.

Meanwhile, the King's ministers were daily becoming more unpopular, from the decided resistance he had at length made to the iniquitous measures sought to be forced on him by the Assembly. The Jacobin and Cordelier clubs thundered against them, night after night, in the most violent and indignant strains ; and the general misery of the country, which in reality was owing to the Revolution, was universally ascribed to their factious resistance to it.* The emigration of the nobles, and general distrust or actual bankruptcy of the capitalists, had destroyed almost entirely the home trade of France. Manufactures of every sort were at a stand, and the workmen employed in them, destitute of bread, added everywhere to the formidable and seditious groups which menaced the public tranquillity. This distress, which was universal, was fearfully aggravated by its immediately succeeding the unbounded hopes of general felicity which had been formed at the commencement of the Revolution.† A contemporary writer, of the republican party, has left the following picture of the state of France at this period : “ In truth, the real evils of France at this period were such that they could hardly be exaggerated, even by the most malignant ambition. Two parties, equally inveterate in their animosities, equally rancorous in their hatred, divided the country from one end to the other. The Jacobins reproached the Feuillants with labouring in secret for the restoration of the old régime ; the Feuillants retorted on the Jacobins that they had organised, by means of their affiliated clubs, the most infernal despotism that had ever

* “ Celsus et Paulinus, cum prudentiâ eorum nemo uteretur, inani nomine ducum, aliæ culpæ prætendebantur—Tribuni, centurionesque ambigui, quod spretis melioribus deterrimi valebant : miles alacer, qui tamen jussa ducum interpretari quam exsequi mallet.”—TACITUS, *Hist.* ii. 39.

† “ Nous avons noté le dehors, les journaux, les clubs. Mais sous cette surface sonore, est le dessous, insondable, muet, *l'infini de la souffrance*. Souffrance croissante, aggravée moralement par l'amertume d'un si grand espoir trompé, aggravée matériellement par la disparition subite de toute ressource. Le premier résultat des violences fut de faire partir, outre les nobles, beaucoup de gens riches ou aisés, nullement ennemis de la Révolution, mais qui avaient

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oppressed mankind. The constitution for which the nation had so ardently panted, and which it was fondly hoped would prove a remedy for every evil, was finished, and yet the public miseries were augmented. Every day saw fresh crimes against persons and property committed, and all with impunity. The public peace was in no degree re-established: the laws were powerless, the magistrates impotent. It had been expected that the public tranquillity would be effectually restored by the *Juges de Paix*, elected by the people, and therefore possessing their confidence; but they had proved totally powerless. Public and private credit had alike perished amidst the general convulsions. Specie had disappeared from the circulation. The assignat had fallen to a third of its value, and occasioned such an amount of ruin to private fortunes that numbers already wished for a return to the ancient régime, and were doing their utmost to promote it. Famine, the usual attendant on public calamities, had appeared, and its pangs were aggravated by their being felt in the midst of abundance. The peasants, tenacious of their property, everywhere refused the assignats, to the fall of which no limit could be assigned, and the purchasers in towns had nothing else to offer. Thus sales could not be effected: both parties were in despair, and poverty was universal, though there was plenty in the land. In this extremity, crowds of famishing citizens threw themselves on the barnyards of the farmers, and took grain by force: while the rural population sounded the tocsin in their villages, and forced the municipal officers to put themselves at their head to resist this violence, or retaliated by pillaging the

peur. Ce qui restait, n'osait ni bouger, ni entreprendre, ni vendre, ni acheter, ni fabriquer, ni dépenser. L'argent effrayé se tenait au fond des bourses; toute spéculation, tout travail était arrêté. L'ouvrier muet et sombre, renvoyé des ateliers, se promenait les bras croisés, errait tout le jour, écoutait les conversations des groupes animés, remplissait les clubs, les tribunes, les abords de l'Assemblée. Toute émeute, payée ou non payée, trouvait dans la rue une armée d'ouvriers aigris de misère, de travailleurs excédés d'ennui et d'inaction, trop heureux, de manière ou d'autre, de travailler au moins un jour."—MICHELET. *Histoire de la Révolution*, ii. 410.

burghs ; and the law, equally trampled under foot by both parties, was alike impotent to repress or punish the violence of either. This was the state of France during the whole winter."¹ Such is the picture of France at this period, drawn by two ardent supporters of the Revolution.

One branch of the public service had in an especial manner fallen into disorder, from the confusion consequent on the Revolution—and this, from its subsequent importance during the war, deserves particular notice. The NAVY had in a few years become so disorganised, that hardly a vestige of the noble fleet which Louis XVI. had nursed up with so much care, to counterbalance that of England, could be said to remain. The ships indeed were there, the arsenals were full, but discipline and subordination were at an end. The national riches were dried up in their sources by the destruction of credit and capital during the Revolution : St Domingo, the most important colony of France, was in a state of insurrection or discord ; the marine was discontented ; the dockyards, the vessels, the arsenals, presented a frightful picture of insubordination, license, and neglect. "The cause of these evils," says Bertrand de Molleville, the minister of marine, "was evident. Those who should obey had everywhere assumed the direction ; those who should direct, being deprived of all authority, were overwhelmed with impunity by outrages and abuse. In truth, there was not a single instance of a mutiny in the ports, or on board the royal vessels, in which the mutineers had been punished. The most legitimate and necessary acts of authority were deemed insults, by men who had suddenly passed from a state of necessary subjection to one of absolute independence. Clubs of all sorts, incorporations a thousand times more dangerous and powerful than those which the constitution had destroyed, and which set every species of authority at defiance, were established in every port, and proscribed, outraged, or put to flight their superiors. These facts are notorious—no words can exaggerate them."²

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1791.

¹ Deux
Amis, vi.
345, 350.

47.

Decay and
ruin of the
navy.

² Bert.
de Mol.
Compte
rendu à
l'Assemblée
Nationale,
28th March,
1792. Mém.
i. 299, 302.

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1791.

48.

Commence-
ment of agi-
tation in St
Domingo.

While the royal navy was in this deplorable state of disorganisation and mutiny, the noblest colony of France, which singly sustained the colossus of its maritime power, had fallen, from the effects of the Revolution, into a series of disasters the most dreadful recorded in history. The slaves in that flourishing colony, agitated by the intelligence which they received of the levelling principles of the Constituent Assembly, had early manifested symptoms of insubordination. The Assembly, divided between the desire of enfranchising so large a body of men, and the evident dangers of such a step, had long hesitated as to the course they should adopt, and were inclined to support the rights of the planters. In the debate which ensued, decisive evidence was afforded of the length to which the Jacobins were inclined to push their principles, and the total disregard of human suffering in carrying them into practice by which they were distinguished. "Perish the colonies," said Moreau de St Méry, "rather than that one principle be sacrificed!" "Perish the colonies," added Robespierre, "rather than affix a stain to your happiness, your glory, your liberty! Yes, I repeat it. Perish the colonies, rather than let them, by their menaces, compel us to do what is most loudly called for by their interests!" Pressed by the dangers clearly depicted on one side, and the clamour as loudly expressed on the other, the Assembly steered a middle course, by decreeing that all persons of colour, born of free parents, should have the right of entering the colonial Assemblies; but declaring that beyond that they would not go, unless the colony itself took the initiative.¹

May 15.
¹ Hist. Parl.
xii. 96, 97.
Toul. ii. 93.
Lac. i. 214.
Deux Amis,
vi. 402, 403.

49.
Dreadful
insurrection
there.

But these steps were too slow for the revolutionists. The passions of the negroes were excited by the efforts of a society, styled "The Society of Friends of the Blacks," of which Brissot was the leading member; and the mulattoes were induced, by their injudicious advice, to organise a rebellion. They trusted that they would be able to control the ferocity of the slaves even during the heat of

a revolt ; they little knew the dissimulation and cruelty of the negro character. A universal insurrection was planned and organised, without the slightest suspicion on the part of the planters, and the same night fixed on for its breaking out over the whole island. Accordingly, at midnight on the 30th of September the insurrection began. In an instant, twelve hundred coffee and two hundred sugar plantations were in flames ; the buildings, the machinery, the farm-offices, were reduced to ashes ; the unfortunate proprietors hunted down, murdered, or thrown into the flames by the infuriated slaves. Ere long a hundred thousand rebels were in arms, who committed everywhere the most frightful atrocities. The horrors of a servile war universally appeared. The unchained African signalised his ingenuity by the discovery of new and unheard-of modes of torture. An unhappy planter was sawed asunder between two boards ; the horrors inflicted on the women exceeded anything known even in the annals of Christian ferocity. The indulgent master was sacrificed equally with the inhuman ; on all alike, young and old, rich and poor, the wrongs of an oppressed race were indiscriminately wreaked. Crowds of slaves traversed the country with the heads of white children affixed on their pikes ; they served as the standards of these furious assemblages. In a few instances only, the humanity of the negro character resisted the contagion of the time ; and some faithful slaves, at the hazard of their own lives, fed in caves their masters, or the children of these, whom they had rescued from destruction.¹

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1791.

Sept. 30.

Oct. 30.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xii. 295, 305.
Deux Amis,
vi. 403, 404.
Lac. i. 214.
Toul. ii. 98.

The intelligence of these disasters excited an angry discussion in the Assembly. Brissot, the most vehement opponent of slavery, ascribed them all to the refusal of the blessings of freedom to the negroes ; the moderate members, to the inflammatory addresses circulated among them by the Anti-Slavery Society of Paris. At length it was agreed to concede to the men of colour the political

50.
The Assembly
concedes
universal
emancipation.
Nov. 7.

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1791.

rights for which they contended ; and in consequence of that resolution the blacks were at once emancipated, and St Domingo obtained the nominal blessing of freedom. But it is not thus that the great changes of nature are conducted ; a child does not acquire the strength of manhood in an hour, or a tree the consistency of the hardy denizens of the forest in a season. The hasty philanthropists who conferred upon an ignorant slave population the precipitate gift of freedom, did them a greater injury than their worst enemies. The black population remain to this day, in St Domingo, a memorable example of the ruinous effect of precipitate emancipation. Without the steady habits of civilised society ; ignorant of the wants which reconcile to a life of labour ; destitute of the support which a regular government might have afforded, they have brought to the duties of cultivated, the habits of savage life. To the indolence of the negro character they have joined the vices of European corruption ; profligate, idle, and disorderly, they have declined both in number and in happiness : from being the greatest sugar-plantation in the world, the island has been reduced to the necessity of importing that valuable produce ; and the inhabitants, naked and voluptuous, are fast receding into the state of nature from which their ancestors were torn, two centuries ago, by the rapacity of Christian avarice.¹ *

¹ Bert. de
Moll. Mém.
i. 193, 201.
Lac. i. 215.
Toul. ii. 98.
Deux Amis,
vi. 403, 405.

51.
Origin of the
disturbances
at Avignon.

An internal disaster, attended with circumstances of equal atrocity, though not on so great a scale, occurred in Avignon. This city, belonging to the Pope, had been the theatre of incessant strife and bloody events ever since the project had been formed, in 1790, by its ardent democrats, to procure its severance from the Ecclesiastical States, and effect its union with the neighbouring and revolutionised provinces of France. This project was rejected by the Constituent Assembly in May 1790, from the appre-

* The details of this dreadful insurrection, with a full account of the subsequent history of St Domingo, will be given in a succeeding chapter, which treats of the expedition sent by Napoleon to recover that island. It is not the least important incident of the eventful era. Vide *infra*, chap. xxxvi.

hension of exciting the jealousy of the European powers by the open spoliation of a neighbouring and friendly state ; but the democratic party, ardently desirous of promoting the union with France, rose in insurrection on the night of the 11th June, chased from the city the papal legate, who retired to Chambéry in Savoy, and put the arms of France over the gates of his palace. With this revolt terminated the government of the Pope in this distant and diminutive possession. A long period of discord and self-government ensued, during which the ruling democrats of Avignon, having shaken off the authority of the Holy See, were striving to effect its junction with France ; and at length, on the 14th September, the Constituent Assembly, on the very last day of its sitting, decreed, amidst loud applause, the annexation of this little state : commencing thus that system of propagandism and foreign aggression, in which revolutionary passions find their natural vent, and which was destined to carry the French arms to the Kremlin, and to bring the Tartars and Bashkirs to the walls of Paris.^{1*}

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1791.

June 11.

Sept. 14.

¹ Prudhom.
Crimes de la
Rév. iv. 587.
Moniteur,
Sept. 15.

It was predicted, and perhaps expected, by the Revolutionists, both in Paris and Avignon, that this long-agitated incorporation would at once still the furious passions which had so long torn this unhappy community. But such was very far from being the case ; and the annexation shortly led to a massacre more frightful than any which had yet stained the progress of the Revolution. The municipality passed a decree, ordering the whole bells and plate of the cathedral and of the churches to be seized and publicly sold.² The rural population, roused by the priests, and indignant at this act, as they deemed it, of sacrilege, assembled in crowds, loudly demanding an

52.
Progress
of the dis-
orders in
Avignon.

Oct. 16.

² Prudhom.
iv. 16, 20.
Deux Amis,
vi. 374.

* " L'Assemblée Nationale, considérant qu'en vertu des droits de la France sur les états réunis d'Avignon et du comtat Venaissin, et conformément au vœu librement et solennellement émis par la majorité des communes et des citoyens de ces deux pays, pour être incorporé à la France, les dits deux états réunis d'Avignon et du comtat Venaissin sont, dès ce moment, partie intégrale de l'empire Français."—*Décret*, 14 Sept. 1791 ; *Moniteur*, 15 Sept. 1791, p. 1073.

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account of the dilapidation and embezzlement of the municipality ; and having got hold of Lescuyer, the clerk to the municipality, they murdered him on the spot ; and a woman, with her scissors, scooped out the eyes of the dead body.

53.
Massacres
at Avignon,
Oct. 30.

The revenge of the popular party was slow, but not the less atrocious. In silence they collected their forces ; and at length, when all assistance was absent, surrounded the city. The gates were closed, the walls manned, so as to render all escape impossible, and a band of assassins, headed by Jourdan, nicknamed “*Coupe-tête*”—already signalised by his atrocity on the 6th October, when the royal family were brought from Versailles to Paris—sought out, in their own houses, the individuals destined for death. Sixty unhappy wretches, including thirteen women, were speedily seized and thrust into prison, where, during the obscurity of night, the murderers wreaked their vengeance with impunity. One young man put fourteen to death with his own hand, and at length only desisted from excess of fatigue ; the father was brought to witness the massacre of his children, the children that of the father, to aggravate their sufferings ; twelve women perished after having undergone tortures worse than death itself ; an old priest, remarkable for a life of beneficence, who had escaped, was pursued, and sacrificed by the objects of his bounty. A mother big with child was thrown, yet alive, into a ditch filled with dead bodies and quicklime ; a son having thrown himself into his father’s arms to save his life, they were precipitated, locked in each other’s embrace, into the ditch, where they were found both dead, with their lips pressed together. The women were violated before being murdered ; and such was the fury of the people that they actually devoured human hearts, and had dishes served up formed of the bodies of their victims.* The recital of these atrocities excited the utmost commiseration in the Assembly. Cries of indignation arose on all

* “*Comment oublier ces repas barbares de cœurs palpitans, et ces festins inouïs où les entrailles fumantes servirent de mets !*”—*PRUDHOMME*, iv. 21.

sides ; the president fainted after reading the letter which communicated its details. But this, like almost all the other crimes of the popular party during the progress of the Revolution, remained unpunished. The Legislature, after some delay, felt it necessary to proclaim an amnesty, and some of the authors of this massacre afterwards fell the victims, on the 31st May, of the sanguinary passions of which they had given so cruel an example. In a revolution, the ruling power, themselves supported by the populace, can rarely punish its excesses : the period of reaction must be waited for before this can in general be attempted ; and thus vice advances with accelerated strides from the very magnitude of the crimes committed by itself.¹

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March 29,
1792.¹ Lac. i. 213.
Toul. ii. 97.
Prudhom.
iv. 21. Hist.
Parl. xii.
421.

All these accumulated horrors and disasters, though brought about by the passions of the Revolution, were ascribed by the Jacobins of Paris to the resistance opposed by the King's ministers to the progress of its principles. It was their fanaticism which roused the rural population ; it was their gold which hired miscreants to commit these atrocities, in order to bring discredit on the Revolution ; it was they who famished the people ; it was they who hindered the sales of grain, who depreciated the assignats, and had ruined St Domingo. The clamour soon became universal, irresistible. The people believed everything they were told ; and, as usual in the presence of danger, divisions soon appeared among the ministers themselves. The one half, led by de Lessart and Bertrand de Molleville, were inclined to the aristocratic and decided—the other, headed by Narbonne and Cahier de Gerville, to the democratic and conceding side. Sensible of the weakness of their adversaries, the popular leaders in the Assembly pushed their advantages, and preferred an accusation against the two former of the ministry. Though they were baffled for some time by the ability and presence of mind of Bertrand de Molleville, yet at length the King was obliged to yield, and make a total change in his councils. The principle adopted in the formation

54.
Fall of the
ministry,
and admis-
sion of the
Girondists
to power.

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of the new ministry was the same as that acted on in similar extremities by Charles I.—to divide the opposition, by the selection of the least intemperate of its members. Roland was made minister of the interior; Dumourier received the portfolio of foreign affairs; Lacoste, Clavière, Duranthon, and Servan were severally appointed to the marine, the finances, the judicatory, and the ministry of war.¹

¹Mig. i. 164.
Lac. i. 218,
224. Th. ii.
57, 58.

55.
Character of
Dumourier.

Dumourier was forty-seven years of age when he was called to this important situation. He had many of the qualities of a great man: abilities, an enterprising character, indefatigable activity, impetuosity of disposition, confidence in his own fortune; a steady and quick *coup-d'œil*. Fertile in resources, pliant in temper, engaging in conversation, unbounded in ambition, he was eminently qualified to rise to distinction in a period of civil commotion. But these great mental powers were counterbalanced by others of an opposite tendency. A courtier before 1789, a constitutionalist under the first Assembly, a Girondist under the second, he seemed inclined to change with every wind that blew, in the constant desire to raise himself to the head of affairs. Volatile, fickle, inconsiderate, he adopted measures too hastily to insure success; veering with all the changes of the times, he wanted the ascendant of a powerful, and the weight of a virtuous character. Had he possessed, with his own genius, the firmness of Bouillé, the passions of Mirabeau, or the dogmatism of Robespierre, he might for a time have ruled the Revolution. An admirable partisan, he was a feeble leader of a party; well qualified to play the part of Antony or Alcibiades, he was unfit to follow the steps of Cæsar or Cromwell.²

²Mig. i. 164.
Lac. i. 224.
Th. ii. 59.

56.
Of M. Ro-
land.

Austere in character, simple in manners, firm in principle, Roland was in every respect the reverse of Dumourier. His disposition had nothing in common with the age in which he lived; he aimed to bring to the government of France, in the eighteenth century, the integrity

and simplicity of the Sabine farm. A steady republican, he was well qualified for a quiescent, but ill for an incipient state of freedom. Uncompromising in his principles, unostentatious in his manners, unambitious in his inclination, he would probably never have emerged from the seclusion of private life, but for the splendid abilities and brilliant character of his wife. But he was opinionative and pedantic ; ignorant alike of courts and the people ; a devout believer in popular virtue and human perfectibility, and wholly unequal to struggle with the audacious wickedness which was arising on all sides with the progress of the Revolution. The court ladies named the new ministry, “*Le Ministère sans Culottes.*” The first time that Roland presented himself at the palace he was dressed with strings in his shoes, and a round hat. The master of the ceremonies refused to admit him in such an unwonted costume, not knowing who he was ; but being afterwards informed, and in consequence obliged to do so, he turned to Dumourier, and said with a sigh, “*Ah, sir, no buckles in his shoes !*”—“*All is lost !*” replied the minister of foreign affairs with sarcastic irony. Yet was there more in this circumstance than superficial observers would be inclined to admit. The buckles were straws, but they were straws which showed how the wind set. Dress is characteristic of manners, and manners are the mirror of ideas. A very curious work might be written upon the connection between changes in attire and revolutions in empires.¹

¹ Roland, *Mém.* i. 32.
Lac. i. 225.
Hist. de la
Conv. i. 38.
Mig. i. 165.

But the new ministers proved as unable as those who preceded them had been, to arrest or even to alleviate the public calamities. These were owing to the overthrow of the executive, and the suspension of all the powers of government, and were consequently rather likely to be increased than diminished by the accession of the liberal party to office. The Girondists, indeed, were propitiated, and Madame Roland gave cabinet dinners to their entire satisfaction ; but that neither sustained the assignats nor

57.
Increasing
difficulties
of govern-
ment, and
distress of
the country.
March 27.

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filled the treasury ; it neither stilled the Jacobins nor gave bread to the people. The King was firm in his determination to abide by the constitution, and gave, on several occasions, the most decisive and touching proofs of this determination.* But meanwhile the public distress was constantly increasing, and the people, inflamed by the speeches at the Jacobin clubs, ascribed them all to the resistance of the monarch to the severe laws against the clergy, which kept the nation, it was said, in continual turmoil, and alone prevented the completion of the glorious fabric of the Revolution. The difficulties of the exchequer were extreme, and all attempts to re-establish the finances, except by the continual issue of fresh assignats, had become nugatory, from the impossibility of collecting the revenue in the midst of the anarchy which prevailed in the country. Such was the penury of the royal treasury that it was entirely exhausted by the equipment of the constitutional guard, though it only amounted to eighteen hundred men ; and the King was indebted to a loan of 500,000 francs (£20,000) from the Order of Malta, for the means of defraying the necessary expenses of his household.¹

¹ Bert. de
Moll. Mém.
i. 394, 395.
Deux Amis,
vi. 390, 395.

58.
The disasters of the war augmented the King's danger, April 20.

The Girondist ministers were no sooner in power than they bent their whole force to impel the King into a foreign war ; and they succeeded, by dint of clamour and popular pressure, in compelling the monarch, alike against his wishes and his interests, to take the fatal step. The details of the agitation by which this important step was brought about, and the negotiations which preceded it, will be fully given in a subsequent chapter, which treats

* In a delicate matter brought before the royal council in January 1792, the King had to choose between two courses, the one of which would have given a considerable extension to the royal authority without exciting public jealousy, as it was generally called for, and the other was more conformable to the spirit and letter of the constitution. Louis, without a moment's hesitation, adopted the latter, assigning as his reason—"We must not think of extending the royal power, but of faithfully executing the constitution." On another occasion, when a proclamation was brought him to sign against the plundering and massacres which were going on in the country, he observed the phrase "*Ces désordres troublent bien amèrement le bonheur dont nous jouissons.*"

of the causes which led to the Revolutionary war.* But the reaction of hostilities, when they did commence, on the King's situation in the interior, was terrible. All the enterprises of France, in the outset, proved unfortunate : all her armies were defeated. These disasters, the natural effect of thirty years' unbroken Continental peace, and recent license and insubordination, produced the utmost consternation in Paris. The power of the Jacobins was rapidly increasing : their affiliated societies were daily extending their ramifications throughout France, and the debates of the parent club shook the kingdom from one end to the other. They accused the Royalists of having occasioned the defeats, by raising treasonable cries of *Sauve qui peut*. The aristocrats could not dissemble their joy at events which promised shortly to bring the allied armies to Paris, and restore the ancient régime ; the generals attributed their disasters to Dumourier, who had planned the campaign ; he ascribed everything to the defective mode in which his orders had been executed. Distrust and recrimination universally prevailed. In this extremity, the Assembly took the most energetic measures for insuring, as they conceived, their own authority and the public safety. But the only measures which they thought of were such as weakened the royal authority ; all their blows were directed against the King. They declared their sittings permanent, disbanded the faithful guard of the King, which had excited unbounded jealousy among the democrats, and passed a decree condemning the refractory clergy to exile.¹ To secure their power in the capital, and effectually overawe the Court, they

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May 29.
¹ Toul. ii.
 121. Lac.
 i. 234. Th.
 ii. 80. Hist.
 Parl. xiv.
 297, 342.
 Bert. de
 Moll. Mém.
 ii. 7, 9.

"Effacez cela," said Louis : "ne me faites pas parler de mon bonheur. Comment voulez-vous que je sois heureux quand personne ne l'est en France ! Non, monsieur, les Français ne sont pas heureux—je les sais : ils le seront un jour, j'espère : alors je le serai aussi, et je pourrai parler de mon bonheur." "During five months and a half," adds Bertrand de Molleville, "that I was in the King's ministry at this time, I never saw the King for a single instant swerve from his attachment to the constitution."—*Mémoires de BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE*, i. 219, 311, 312.

* See *infra*, chap. ix.

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directed the formation of a camp of twenty thousand men near Paris, and sought to maintain the enthusiasm of the people by revolutionary fêtes, and to increase their efficiency by arming them with pikes.

59.
Debate on
the disband-
ing of the
royal guard.

Of these measures, by far the most important was that which related to the disbanding of the royal guard; for it threatened to leave the monarch and his family without even the shadow of protection, in the midst of a rebellious city, and at the mercy of a revolutionary legislature. The discussion was opened by Pétion, mayor of Paris, who drew, in the darkest colours, a picture of the agitation in the capital. "Paris," said he, "is every hour becoming more the object of general anxiety to all France. It is the common rendezvous of all without a profession, without bread, and enemies of the public weal. The fermentation is daily assuming a more alarming character. Facts on all sides demonstrate this. It is evident a crisis is approaching, and that of the most violent kind; you have long shut your eyes to it, but you can do so no longer." This was immediately followed by a deputation from the section of the Gobelins at Paris, consisting of fifteen hundred pikemen, preceded by the regiment of grenadiers of the section, who, after defiling through the Assembly with drums beating and colours flying, took post round its walls to overawe the deliberations. Nevertheless, many deputies courageously resisted the dissolution of this last remnant of protection to the sovereign. "The veil," says Girardin, "is now withdrawn; the insurrection against the throne is no longer disguised. We are called on, in a period of acknowledged public danger, to remove the last constitutional protection from the crown. Why are we always told of the dangers to be apprehended from the royalist faction—a party weak in numbers, despicable in influence, whom it would be so easy to subdue? I see two factions, and a double set of dangers, and one advances by hasty strides to a regicide government.¹ Would to

¹Lac. i. 171,
234. Toul.
ii. 121. Th.
ii. 30, 31.
Hist. Parl.
xiv. 305,
307. Moni-
teur, May
30.

God my anticipations may prove unfounded ! But I cannot shut my eyes to the striking analogy of England and France ; I cannot forget that, in a similar crisis, the Long Parliament disbanded the guard of Charles I. What fate awaited that unhappy monarch ? What now awaits the constitutional sovereign of the French ?”

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So clearly did Louis perceive the extreme danger of disbanding his guard, on the eve, as had now become evident to all, of a popular insurrection, that he immediately submitted to his ministers a letter which he proposed to write to the Assembly, refusing to sanction it. But the Girondist ministers to a man declined to countersign it. Upon this he proposed to go in person to the Assembly, and oppose the proposition, taking the whole responsibility upon himself ; but they had the pusillanimity to refuse to accompany him. They then insisted so vehemently upon the extreme animosity which the guard had excited in Paris, and the peril of instant destruction to which the royal family would be exposed if the decree was not instantly sanctioned, that at length he was compelled to submit. Hardly had he done so, when he received a firm and able remonstrance from Bertrand de Molleville against so fatal a step, in which that minister demonstrated in the clearest manner the flagrant usurpation of which the Assembly had been guilty, in decreeing the dissolution of a guard which the constitution had expressly sanctioned, and subjected to his command alone. But it was too late. The King could only reply that he had been forced to do so by his ministers, and lament the necessity to which he had been subjected, of removing so faithful a councillor from his administration.^{1*} The Girondists had their reward.

60.
The King
is forced to
sanction the
disbanding.
May 31.

¹ On the
31st May
1793. Bert.
de Moll.
Mém. ii.
11, 12.

* “ Il n'est malheureusement plus temps de faire ce que vous proposez. Les ministres m'ont assuré que la fermentation du peuple était si violente, qu'il n'était pas possible de différer la sanction du décret sans exposer la garde et le château aux plus grands dangers ; j'en suis assez fâché ; que voulez-vous que je fasse, environné comme je le suis, sans avoir personne sur qui je puisse compter ?”—LOUIS, 31st May 1792 ; BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, ii. 12, 13.

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61.

Resolute
resistance of
the King to
the decree
against the
Church.

The insurrection which followed on the 10th August overturned them not less than the throne ; and a year from the time on which they refused to stand by their sovereign, they were themselves arrested by the Jacobins, and consigned by a lingering process to the scaffold.

The royal guard was remodelled after its dissolution : the officers were in part chosen from a different class, the staff was put into different hands, and companies of pikemen were introduced from the faubourgs to neutralise the loyalty of their fellow-soldiers. The constitutional party made the most vigorous remonstrances against these hazardous innovations. But their efforts were vain : the approach of danger and the public agitation had thrown the whole weight of government into the hands of the Jacobins. The evident peril of his situation roused the pacific King to more than usual vigour. His ministers were incessantly urging him, as the only means of calming the public effervescence, to give his sanction to the decree of exile against the non-juring priests, and to allow the constitutional clergy free access to his person, in order to remove all ground for complaint on the score of religion. Concession to public clamour was their only system of government ; their policy was, not to resist injustice, but to yield to it. On these points, however, Louis was immovable. The Revolution had now reached a point which trenched on his conscientious feelings. Indifferent to personal danger, comparatively insensible to the diminution of the royal prerogative, he was resolutely determined to make no compromise with his religious duties. By degrees he became estranged from the party of the Gironde, and remained several days without addressing them, or letting them know his determination in that particular. It was then that Madame Roland wrote, in name of her husband, the famous letter to the King, in which she strongly urged him to become with sincerity a constitutional monarch, and put an end to the public troubles, by sanctioning the decrees against the priests.¹

June 10.

i. Campan,
ii. 206, 209.
Weber, ii.
168, 169.
Mig. i. 172,
173. Lac. i.
239. Th. ii.
87. Dumou-
rier, Mém.
ii. 174, 300.

This letter, written with much eloquence, but in an irritated and indignant spirit, excited the anger of Louis, who now saw clearly that he could not retain his ministers without having violence done to his conscience. Upon this they tendered their resignation if the decree were not immediately sanctioned, and it was at length accepted.*

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Dumourier endeavoured to take advantage of these events to elevate his own power in the administration. He consented to remain in the ministry, and separate himself from his friends, on condition that the King should sanction the decree against the priests. But Louis persisted in his refusal to ratify these decrees, or the formation of a camp of twenty thousand men at Paris. "You should have thought," said Dumourier, "of these objections before you agreed to the first decree of the Constituent Assembly, which enjoined the clergy to take the oaths."—"I was wrong then," answered the King; "I will not commit such an error on a second occasion." "Your objections," rejoined Dumourier, "were entirely well founded against the original decrees against the priests; but to refuse to sanction this one is to put the dagger to the throats of twenty thousand innocent persons." The Queen, with that good sense which she often evinced in public affairs, saw the risk of now exposing the priests to be massacred by a furious rabble, and united her entreaties to those of the ministers; but still the King was immovable, alleging that he would not make himself a partner in the iniquity of the Assembly.

62.

New minis-
try.
June 12.

* "L'état actuel de la France ne peut subsister longtemps; c'est un état de crise dont la violence a atteint le plus haut degré; il faut qu'il se termine par un éclat, qui doit intéresser votre majesté autant qu'il importe à tout l'empire. Les Français se sont donné une constitution: elle a fait des mécontents et des rebelles: la majorité de la nation la veut maintenir; et elle a vu avec joie la guerre qui offrait un grand moyen de l'assurer. Cependant la minorité, soutenue par des espérances, a réuni tous ses efforts pour emporter l'avantage. De là, cette lutte intestine contre les lois—cette anarchie dont gémissent les bons citoyens—cette division partout répandue, partout excitée. Il n'existe pas d'indifférence; on veut ou le triomphe ou le changement de la constitution. Votre majesté a été constamment dans l'alternative de céder à ses premières habitudes, à ses affections particulières, ou de faire des sacrifices dictés par la

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¹ Dumourier, *Mém.*
ii. 174, 307.
Lac. i. 240.
Mig. i. 173.
Th. ii. 103,
104.

"I expect death," said he, "and forgive my murderers beforehand: I esteem you and love you; but I cannot act against my conscience. Adieu! may you be happy." Dumourier, after having lost the confidence of his party, found himself compelled soon after to set out for the army, where he soon acquired a more lasting reputation as a general. The Assembly broke out into the most furious invectives against the Court upon the dismissal of the popular ministers, and declared that they carried with them the regrets of the nation.¹

63.
New ministry from the
Feuillants.

The new ministry were chosen from among the Feuillants. Scipion Chambonnas and Terrier Montiel were appointed to the foreign affairs and the finances; but they were soon found to be without consideration either with their party or the country. The crown lost the support of a party powerful in the Assembly at least, if not in the country, and who thought they could advance the cause of freedom by means of the Revolution, at the very moment that its most violent excesses were about to break out. The King was so much disconcerted at the proved impossibility of forming an efficient administration, that he fell into a state of mental depression, which he had never experienced since the commencement of the public disturbances. For ten days together he hardly articulated a word, and seemed so completely overwhelmed as to have lost almost the physical power of motion. The Queen, whose energy nothing could subdue, at length roused him from this deplorable state, by throwing

philosophie, exigés par la nécessité, par conséquent enhardir les rebelles en inquiétant la nation, ou d'apaiser celle-ci en vous unissant avec elle. Tout a son terme, et celui de l'incertitude est enfin arrivé. La fermentation est extrême dans toutes les parties de l'empire; elle éclatera d'une manière terrible, à moins qu'une confiance raisonnée dans les intentions de votre majesté ne puisse enfin la calmer; mais cette confiance ne s'établira pas sur des protestations. Elle ne saurait plus avoir de base que des faits. La conduite des prêtres, en beaucoup d'endroits, a fait porter une loi sage contre les perturbateurs--que votre majesté lui donne sa sanction. Juste Ciel! auriez-vous frappé d'aveuglement les puissances de la terre; et n'auront-elles jamais que des conseils qui les entraînent à leur ruine?"—*ROLAND au Roi*, 10 *Juin* 1792. *Hist. Parl.* xv. 40, 45.—(Written by MADAME ROLAND.)

herself at his feet, and conjuring him, by the duty he owed to her and their children, to summon up more resolution ; and if death was unavoidable, to perish with honour combating for their rights, rather than remain to be stifled within the walls of the palace.* But if this heroic princess thus exerted herself to rouse the spirit of the King, it was not because she was either ignorant of, or insensible to, the dangers which threatened her. The Tuileries were constantly surrounded by a ferocious multitude, uttering the most violent sentiments, and vowing death to the King, Queen, and whole royal family. In the palace itself, where she was virtually confined as a prisoner, the cannoneers of the guard openly insulted her when she appeared at the windows, and expressed in the most brutal language their desire to see her head on the point of their bayonets. The gardens of the Tuileries were the scenes of every species of disorder. In one quarter, a popular orator was to be seen pouring forth treason and sedition to an enraptured audience ; in another, an ecclesiastic was thrown down, and beaten with merciless severity ; while the people, with thoughtless confidence, pursued their walks round the marbled parterres, as if they had no interest in the insults which were levelled at religion and the throne.¹

The King, at this time, seeing himself a prisoner in his own palace, deprived of his guard, and wholly unable to exercise any of the functions assigned to him by the constitution, had opened a secret correspondence with the allied courts, with the view of directing and moderat-

* “ Le Roi, si résigné et si impassible, fléchit un moment sous le poids de tant de douleurs, et de tant d’humiliations : concentré dans ses pensées, il restait dix jours entiers sans dire une parole même à sa famille. Sa dernière lutte avec le malheur semblait avoir épuisé ses forces. Il se sentait vaincu, et voulait, pour ainsi dire, mourir d’avance. La Reine, en se jetant à ses pieds, et en lui présentant ses enfants, finit par l’arracher à ce silence. ‘ Gardons,’ lui dit-elle, ‘ toutes nos forces pour livrer ce long combat avec la fortune. La perte fut-elle inévitable, il y a encore le choix de l’attitude dans laquelle on périt. Pêrissions en rois, et n’attendons pas, sans résistance et sans vengeance, qu’on vienne nous étouffer sur le parquet de nos appartements.’ ” —LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, i. 165.

¹ Dumont, 116. Camp. ii. 203, 208. Weber, ii. 164, 167. Lac, i. 240. Mig. i. 174.

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64.

The King's
secret cor-
respondence
with the
Allies.

¹ Bertrand
de Molle-
ville, Hist.
de la Rév.
viii. 38, 39.
Th. ii. 109.
Mallet du
Pan, i. 284,
290.

65.

Efforts of
Lafayette
to support
the throne.

ing their measures in advancing for his deliverance. For this purpose he had despatched M. Mallet du Pan, a courageous royalist who for four years had been the editor of the *Mercure de France*, to Vienna, with instructions written with his own hand, in which he recommended that they should advance into the French territory with the utmost caution, show every indulgence to the inhabitants, and cause their march to be preceded by a manifesto, in which they should avow the most moderate and conciliatory dispositions. The original document remains, a precious monument of the wisdom and patriotic spirit of that unhappy sovereign. It is remarkable that he recommends, in order to separate the ruling faction of the Jacobins from the nation, exactly the same language and conduct which was, throughout the whole period, strenuously advised by Mr Burke, and was twenty years afterwards employed with so much success by the Emperor Alexander and the allied sovereigns to detach the French people from the standard of Napoleon.¹ *

Alarmed at the evident danger of the monarchy, the friends of the constitution used the most vigorous means to repress the growing spirit of insubordination. Lally Tollendal and Malouet, of the ancient monarchical party, united with the leaders of the Feuillants, Duport, Lameth,

* The King recommended that the Emperor and King of Prussia should publish a proclamation, in which they should declare, "That they were obliged to take up arms to resist the aggression made upon them, which they ascribed neither to the King nor the nation, but to the criminal faction which domineered alike over the one and the other; that, in consequence, far from departing from the friendly feelings which they entertained towards the King of France, their majesties had taken up arms only to deliver him and the nation from an atrocious tyranny which equally oppressed both, and to enable them to re-establish freedom upon a secure foundation: that they had no intentions of intermeddling in any form with the internal government of the nation, but only desired to restore to it the power of choosing that which really was in accordance with the wishes of the great majority: that they had no thoughts whatever of conquest; that individual should be not less protected than national property; that their majesties took under their especial safeguard all faithful and peaceable citizens, and declared war only against those who now ruled with a rod of iron all who aimed at the establishment of freedom." In pursuance of these principles, he besought the emigrants to take no part in the war; to avoid everything which could give it the appearance of

and Barnave, for this purpose. Lafayette, who was employed on the frontier at the head of the army, employed his immense influence for the same object. From the camp at Maubeuge he wrote, on the 16th June, an energetic letter to the Assembly, in which he denounced the Jacobin faction, demanded the dissolution of the clubs, the emancipation and establishment of a constitutional throne; and conjured the Assembly, in the name of itself, of the army, and of all the friends of liberty, to confine itself to strictly legal measures. This letter had the success which may be anticipated for attempts to control a revolution by those who have been instrumental in producing it: it excited the most violent dissatisfaction, destroyed the popularity of the writer, and was totally nugatory in calming the populace.¹*

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June 16.

¹ Deux
Amis, vii.
222, 227.
Lac. i. 240.
Mig. i. 175.
Th. ii. 116.

The Girondists, chagrined at the loss of their places in the administration, now proceeded to the most ruinous excesses. They experienced from the very first that cruel necessity to which all who seek to rise by the passions of the people are sooner or later subjected—that of submitting to the vices, and allying themselves with the brutality, of the mob. They openly associated with and flattered men of the most revolting habits and disgusting vulgarity, and commenced that system of revolutionary equality which was so soon to banish politeness,

66.
The Girondists plan a revolt of the populace.

a contest between one nation and another; and urged the Allies to appear as parties, not arbiters, in the contest between the crown and the people; warning them that any other conduct “would infallibly endanger the lives of the King and royal family; overturn the throne; lead to the massacre of the Royalists; rally to the Jacobins all the Revolutionists, who were daily becoming more alienated from them; revive an excitement which was fast declining, and render more obstinate a national resistance, which would yield at the first reverse, if the nation was only convinced that the fate of the Revolution was wound up in the destruction of those who had hitherto been its victims.” This holograph document was dated in June 1792, two months before the 10th August. There is not a more striking monument of political wisdom and foresight on record in modern times.—See BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, vii. 37-39.

* “La chose publique est en péril; le sort de la France repose principalement sur ses représentans; la nation attend d’eux son salut; mais en se donnant une constitution, elle leur a prescrit l’unique route par laquelle ils pensent la sauver. Les circonstances sont difficiles. La France est menacée au dehors et agitée au dedans; tandis que les cours étrangères annoncent

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¹ Dumont,
388. Bert.
de Moll.
Mém. ii. 37.
38; and Hist.
viii. 152, 154.
Deux Amis,
vii. 250, 252.
Mig. i. 75.
Th. ii. 124.

humanity, and every gentler virtue from French society. They resolved to rouse the people by inflammatory petitions and harangues, and hoped to intimidate the court by the show of popular resistance—a dangerous expedient, and one which in the end proved as fatal to them as to the power against which it was first directed. A general insurrection, under their guidance, was prepared in the faubourgs ; and, under the pretence of celebrating the anniversary of the Tennis-court oath, which was approaching, a body of ten thousand men was organised in the quarter of St Antoine. Thus, while the royalists were urging the approach of the European powers, the patriots were rousing the insurrection of the people. Both produced their natural effects—the Reign of Terror, and the despotism of Napoleon.¹

67.
Coalition of
the Girond-
ists and the
Jacobins
against the
crown.

The resistance of the King to the decrees against the priests, and the dismissal of Roland, Clavière, and Servan, produced a temporary coalition between the Girondists and the Jacobins. Though the principles, both moral and political, of the former, differed widely from those of the latter, yet they made no difficulty of now uniting their whole strength with them, to commit the greatest moral and political crime of which men could be guilty—that of effecting the dethronement, and ultimately the intolerable projet d'attacher à notre souveraineté nationale des ennemis intérieurs, ivres de fanatisme ou d'orgueil, entretient un chimérique espoir, et nous fatiguent encore de leur insolente malveillance. Pouvez-vous vous dissimuler qu'une faction, et, pour éviter les dénominations vagues—que la *faction Jacobin* a causé tous les désordres ? C'est elle que j'en accuse hautement. Organisée comme un empire à part, dans sa métropole et dans ses affiliations, aveuglément dirigée par quelques chefs ambitieux, cette secte forme une corporation au milieu du peuple Français, dont elle usurpe les pouvoirs en subjuguant ses représentans et ses mandataires. Que le règne des clubs, anéanti par vous, fasse place au règne de la loi ; leurs usurpations à l'exercice ferme et indépendant des autorités constituées ; leurs maximes désorganisatrices aux vrais principes de la liberté ; leur fureur délirante au courage calme et constant d'une nation qui connaît ses droits ; enfin, leurs combinaisons sectaires aux véritables intérêts de la patrie, qui, dans ce moment de danger, doit réunir tous ceux pour qui son asservissement et sa ruine ne sont pas les objets d'une atroce jouissance, et d'une infâme spéculation.”—LAFAYETTE à l'Assemblée, 16 Juin 1792 ; *Histoire Parlementaire*, xv. 69, 74. A curious picture of the result of the Revolution by one of its earliest and most impassioned supporters !

mately the death, of a virtuous and patriotic monarch, whose whole life had been devoted to the good of his country ; and that for no other fault but that he was striving to protect the innocent, and abide faithfully by the constitution which they themselves had imposed upon him. Fatal effect of the spirit of party ! but one of which history, in similar circumstances, affords too many examples ! Moved by the concurring power of these two great parties, the agitation of the people was not long of reaching that point which was deemed by their leaders sufficient for the most audacious enterprises. And to increase the general excitement, a report was spread abroad, and readily believed, as to the existence of a secret Austrian committee, which in reality ruled the court, and was now inducing the King to resist the execution of the laws against the priests, with the view of involving the country in a civil war, and paralysing the resistance to the Allies. This report, which was an entire fabrication, had a surprising effect in adding to the public agitation. The great object of the Girondists and Jacobins, in these measures, was to render the King's situation so painful that he might be induced to abdicate the throne ; and, but for a heroic sense of duty, he certainly would have done so ; for both he and the Queen were in daily expectation of death, and even wished it, to put a period to their sufferings. So thoroughly was Maria Antoinette persuaded that they were soon to be sacrificed, that she wrote at this period an affectionate letter to the Princess Lamballe, at Vernon, entreating her not to come to Paris to share their dangers—an injunction which only had the effect of inducing that devoted friend instantly to set out and join them. The letter, in the Queen's handwriting, was found in the hair of the Princess Lamballe, when she was murdered, on the 2d September.^{1*}

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¹ Campan, ii. 220, 221.
Bert. de Moll. Mém. i. 359, 362 ; and ii. 56, 57. Hist. Parl. xiv. 278, 281, 416, 420. Lam. Hist. des Gir. ii. 399, 400.

As nothing could shake the firmness of Louis in

* “ Ne revenez pas de Vernon, ma chère Lamballe, avant votre entier rétablissement. Le bon Duc de Penthièvre en serait bien triste et bien affligé, et

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68.

Reasons
which in-
duced the
Girondists
to act im-
mediately.

refusing his sanction to the atrocious decree against the priests, and that for the formation of a camp of twenty thousand men, the Girondists, in concert with the Jacobins, proceeded to a practical demonstration of their power. It was resolved to inundate the palace with the forces of the faubourgs, under the terror of which, it was hoped, the King would either abdicate or sanction the decrees. This was hastened by two petitions, signed, one by twenty thousand, the other by eight thousand, citizens of Paris—for the most part members of the national guard—against the camp of twenty thousand men near Paris, which were presented to the King. They were dictated by the jealousy of that civic force at such an accumulation of the military in their neighbourhood; but the Girondists, alarmed at so unusual a manifestation of the reaction of public opinion against the oppression they were exercising on the King, determined on immediate and decisive measures.¹

¹ Bert. de Moll. Mém. ii. 37, 39, and Hist. viii. 154.

69.

Disgraceful
tumult on
the 20th
June.

On the 20th June, a tumultuous body, ten thousand strong, secretly organised by Pétion, mayor of Paris, and the practical leader of the Girondists, in virtue of a decree of the municipality of that city on the 16th,* set out from the Faubourg St Antoine, and directed itself towards the Assembly. It was the first attempt to overawe the legislature by the display of mere brute force. They were followed by another crowd of still larger numbers, headed

nous nous devons tous de ménager son grand âge et ses vertus. Je vous ai dit si souvent de vous ménager vous-même que, si vous m'aimez, vous penserez à vous. On a besoin de toutes ses forces dans les temps où nous sommes. Ah ! ne revenez pas !—revenez le plus tard possible ! Votre cœur serait trop navré, vous auriez trop à pleurer sur tous mes malheurs—vous qui m'aimez si tendrement. Cette race de tigres qui inonde le royaume jouirait bien cruellement si elle savait tout ce que nous souffrons. Adieu ! ma chère Lamballe : je suis tout occupée de vous, et vous savez si je peux changer jamais.”—MARIE ANTOINETTE à la PRINCESSE LAMBALLE, 16 Juin 1792 ; LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, ii. 399, 400.

* “Mercredi suivant, le 20 Juin, les citoyens des faubourgs St-Antoine et St-Marceau présenteraient à l'Assemblée Nationale et au Roi des pétitions relatives aux circonstances, et planteraient ensuite l'arbre de la liberté sur la terrasse des Feuillans, en mémoire de la séance du Jeu de Paume. Le conseil autorisait ces pétitionnaires à se revêtir des habits qu'ils portaient en 1789 et de leurs armes.”—*Décret du Conseil Municipal de Paris*, 16 Juin 1792 ; *Hist. Parl.* xv. 120.

by the Marquis de Saint Hurugues, a nobleman who had thrown himself without reserve into the arms of the Revolutionists, and Theroigne de Mericourt, a young and handsome amazon, who, after having exhausted all the arts of profligacy, had with still more vehement ardour embraced those of revolution.* The deputation was introduced, after a considerable resistance from the constitutionalists, into the hall, while the doors were besieged by a clamorous multitude. They spoke in the most violent and menacing manner, declaring that they were resolved to avail themselves of the means of resistance in their power, which were recognised in the Declaration of Rights. The petition declared—"The people are ready ; they are fully prepared to have recourse to any measures to put in force the second article of the Rights of Man—resistance to oppression. Let the small minority of your body who do not participate in these sentiments, deliver the earth from their presence, and retire to Coblenz. Examine the causes of our sufferings : if they flow from the royal authority, let it be annihilated. The executive power," it concluded, "is at variance with you. We require no other proof of this than the dismissal of the popular ministers. Does the happiness of the people, then, depend on the caprice of the sovereign ? Should that sovereign

* Théroigne de Méricourt, known by the name of "La Belle Liégeoise," was born at Mericourt near Liege, in Flanders, of a family of opulent cultivators. Her remarkable beauty at the early age of seventeen attracted the notice of a young neighbouring nobleman, who came from the banks of the Rhine, by whom she was seduced and soon after abandoned. Thrown thus into a licentious life, she went to London ; but after a few months' residence there, she was attracted to Paris by the fervour and passions of the Revolution. She bore letters of recommendation to Mirabeau, by whom she was introduced to Sièyes, Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Brissot, and all the leaders of the popular side. The fame of her beauty at first attracted her from their political reunions into the arms of rich voluptuaries ; but ere long her ardent mind became tired of the routine of sensual pleasure, and she threw herself without reserve into the storms and passions of the Revolution. She did not, however, in so doing, abandon her original profession, but employed the influence of her eloquence to rouse, of her charms to seduce, the people.

Dressed as an amazon, in scarlet, with a plume of feathers on her head, a sabre by her side, and a pair of pistols in her girdle, she put herself in the front rank of all the insurrections which had taken place. She was to be seen at the barriers of the Invalides on the 14th July, at the assault of the Bastille

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xv. 138, 139.
Bert. de
Moll. viii.
152.

70.
The peti-
tioners are
supported
by the Gir-
ondists, and
received in
the Assem-
bly.

have any other law than the will of the people? The people are determined, and their pleasure outweighs the wishes of crowned heads. They are the oak of the forest; the royal sapling must bend beneath its branches. We complain of the inactivity of our armies; we call upon you to investigate its causes: if it arises from the executive power, let it be instantly annihilated.”¹

This revolutionary harangue was supported by the authors of the movement in the Assembly. Guadet, a popular leader of the Gironde, exclaimed, “Who will dare now to renew the bloody scene, when, at the close of the Constituent Assembly, thousands of our fellow-citizens were slaughtered in the Champ de Mars, round the altar of France, where they were renewing the most sacred of oaths? If the people are violently alarmed, is it the part of their mandatories to refuse to hear them? Are not the grievances we have just heard re-echoed from one end of France to the other? Is this the first time that in Paris the conduct of the King, and the perfidy of his councils, have excited the public indignation? You have heard the petitioners express themselves with candour, but with the firmness which becomes a free people. It was thus that the Girondists encouraged the populace in their attempts to intimidate the government. Rœderer made a noble

on the same day; on the 5th October, she rode beside Jourdan “Coupe-tête” at the head of the hideous procession which brought the King captive to Paris. Her appearance and beauty never failed strongly to rouse the multitude: they took it as the harbinger of success, and were excited by her theatrical aspect and manner, as well as brilliant courage. It was for this reason that she was placed at the head of the irregular column on the 10th August. She suffered in the end a dreadful punishment for her sins. Having become unpopular, like all the other early leaders of the Revolution, she was seized by the “furies of the guillotine” on the 31st May 1793, stripped naked, and publicly flogged on the terrace of the Tuileries. The indignity, more even than the suffering, drove her mad. Dishonoured and dragged to a mad-house, she lived for twenty years after, perfectly deranged, almost always in a state of nudity, and declaiming alternately bloody diatribes and obscene language. She had considerable powers of eloquence, and was a leading orator, and for a time loudly applauded, at the club of the Cordeliers, even by those who had just heard Camille Desmoulins and Danton. Her seducer met her afterwards at Paris, but she never forgave his desertion, and he perished during the massacres of September 1792. See LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, ii. 369, 373.

effort to rouse the Assembly to a sense of what they owed to themselves and their country on this occasion. "Armed assemblages," said he, "threaten to violate the constitution, the precincts of the representatives of the nation, the abode of the King. The reports received during the night are alarming; the minister of the interior solicits permission to order troops to march instantly to the defence of the Tuileries. The law forbids armed assemblages; they nevertheless advance; they demand admission: but if you once give them leave to enter here, where will be the force of the law? Your indulgence in dispensing with it would shiver to pieces the power of the law in the hands of the magistrates. We ask for your authority to discharge our duties. Leave the responsibility to us; we desire to share with no one the obligation to die for the support of the public tranquillity."¹ But these noble words produced no impression on the Assembly, now entirely intimidated by the cries from the galleries. "The error," said Vergniaud in reply, "which we have long sanctioned now justifies that of the people. The assemblages hitherto formed have appeared legal from the silence of the law. The magistrates now demand force to repress them; but, in these circumstances, what should you do? I feel that there would be extreme rigour in being inflexible towards a fault of which the source is to be found in your own decrees; it would be an insult to the citizens, who demand at this moment to present to you their homage, to suppose they have bad intentions. It is said that this assemblage wish to present an address to the King. I do not believe that the citizens who compose it desire to be introduced armed into the presence of the King; I believe that they will conform to the laws, and go as simple petitioners. I demand that the citizens shall be immediately permitted to defile before you." Encouraged by these words, the crowd entered, amidst shouts of "*Ca Ira*," bearing with them frightful standards and ensigns, expres-

¹ Lam. Hist.
des Gir. ii.
372.

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sive of the most violent revolutionary passion. Over-awed by the danger of their situation, the Assembly received the petition with indulgence, and permitted the mob to defile before them. A motley assemblage, now swelled to thirty thousand persons, men, women, and children, in the most squalid attire, immediately passed through the hall, uttering furious cries, and displaying seditious banners. They were headed by Santerre, and the Marquis de Saint Hurugues, with a drawn sabre in his hand. Immense tablets were borne aloft, having inscribed on them the Rights of Man; others carried banners, bearing as inscriptions—"The Constitution or Death!"—"Long live the Sans Culottes!" On the point of one pike was placed a bleeding calf's heart, with the inscription round it—"The Heart of an Aristocrat." Multitudes of men and women, shaking alternately pikes and olive-branches above their heads, danced round these frightful emblems, singing the revolutionary song of *Ca Ira*. In the midst of these furies dense columns of insurgents defiled, bearing the more formidable weapons of fusils, sabres, and daggers, raised aloft on poles. The loud applause of the galleries, the cries of the mob, the deathlike silence of the Assembly, who trembled at the sight of the auxiliaries they had invoked, formed a scene which baffles all description. The passage of the procession lasted three hours. After leaving the Assembly, they proceeded in a tumultuous mass to the palace.¹

¹ Hist. Parl. xv. 141, 142. Deux Amis, vii. 253, 254. Lac. i. 243. Mig. i. 177. Th. ii. 133, 135. Lam. Hist. des Gir. ii. 367, 368.

71.
Means by which the mob force the entry of the palace gates.

The outer gates leading into the palace were closed when this fearful assemblage presented itself before them; a hundred of the *gendarmérie-à-cheval* were on guard in the Place Carrousel, but they made little resistance. The national guard, however, at the gates, were more determined, and refused admittance in a very resolute manner. "Why have you not entered into the chateau?" said Santerre, at the head of his bands from the Faubourg St-Antoine. "You must go in: we came here for that

alone." Turning then to his cannoneers, he said—"If they refuse admission, we will blow the gate to atoms."

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A gun was brought up and pointed at the gate : a single discharge would have burst it open. As they were knocking violently, M. Boucher Réné, and another municipal officer, with their magisterial scarfs on, came forward, and promised to gain entrance in the name of the law. These magistrates, in a loud voice, demanded admittance, adding, that they had no right to keep them out. The national guard still refused ; upon which they were assured by the municipal officers who headed the crowd, that a deputation, consisting only of twenty persons, the number limited by law, and without arms, should enter ; but no sooner were the doors opened than the mob, headed by two of the municipality, rushed in. In vain the national guards at the inner doors offered to oppose resistance ; they were commanded by the municipal officers to submit to the authority of the law, and had no alternative but to yield.¹*

¹ Rapport de Romainvilliers, Com. de la Garde Nationale sur le 20 Juin. Hist. Parl. xv. 149, 159.

The multitude immediately broke through the court, ascended the staircase, cut open with hatchets the folding-doors, and entered the royal apartments. Louis appeared before them with a few attendants, but a serene air. Those in front, overawed by the dignity of his presence, made an involuntary pause ; but, pressed on by the crowd behind, soon surrounded the monarch. With difficulty his attendants got him withdrawn into the embrasure of a window, while the crowd rolled on through the other rooms of the palace. Seated on a chair which was elevated on a table, and surrounded by a few faithful national guards, who, by holding their

72.

The palace invaded by the multitude.

* "Quelle a été la surprise du commandant, lorsque, s'informant de quelle manière la porte royale avait été ouverte, il apprit qu'elle l'avait été au nom de la loi, par l'ordre des municipaux, qui étaient à la tête de cette députation armée, et l'avaient introduite tout entière. Les Gardes Nationales, toujours soumises à la loi, et prévenues de l'obéissance due à la municipalité, n'ont pu s'opposer à l'entrée de la députation, et, pénétrées de douleur des circonstances, ont fait de leurs personnes ce que la loi leur défendait de faire de leurs armes." — *Rapport de ROMAINVILLIERS, Commandant de la Garde Nationale ; Hist. Parl. xv. 147, 148.*

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bayonets crossed before him, kept off the most unruly of the populace, he preserved a mild and undaunted countenance in the midst of dangers which every instant threatened his life. A young man armed with a pike made repeated endeavours to penetrate to the King: it was the same person who, two years before, had borne the bloody heads of Berthier and Foulon along the streets, and thrown them to the populace as an incitement to fresh deeds of carnage. Never did the monarch appear more truly great than on this trying occasion. To the reiterated demand that he should instantly give his assent to the decrees against the priests, and sanction the establishment of a camp near Paris, or die on the spot, he constantly replied, "This is neither the time nor the way to obtain it of me." A drunken workman handed him the red cap of liberty: with a mild aspect he put the revolutionary emblem on the head on which a diadem was wont to rest, and wore it for three hours. Had he not done so, he would have been stabbed on the spot. Another presented him with a cup of water: though he had long suspected poison, he drank it off in the midst of applause, involuntarily extorted from the multitude. The butcher Legendre, for whom the crowd opened a passage, thus addressed him,—"*Monsieur!* (not Sire) listen to us—you are made to listen. You are a perfidious man! you have always deceived us; even now you are deceiving us. But take care! the cup is full; a drop will make it overflow. The people are tired of being the victims of your deceit." At this time a cry arose outside that the King was put to death. "Throw out the body! Is he struck? Where are the heads?" exclaimed the crowd without one expression of displeasure being manifested, though Garat, Gorsas, and several of the leading Girondists, as well as Marat and many Jacobins, were there. Informed of the danger of the King, a deputation of the Assembly, headed by Vergniaud and Isnard, repaired to the palace. With difficulty they penetrated through

the crowds which filled its apartments, and found the King seated in the same place, unshaken in courage, but almost exhausted by fatigue. One of the national guard approached him to assure him of his devotion. "Feel," said he, placing his hand on his bosom, "whether this is the beating of a heart agitated by fear?" Vergniaud, however, who was in the secret of the real object of the demonstration, at length became apprehensive it would be carried too far, and was not without disquietude from the menaces which he had heard in the remoter parts of the crowd. With some difficulty he succeeded in obtaining a hearing, and persuaded the people to depart. He was seconded by Pétion, and the mob gradually withdrew. By eight o'clock in the evening they had all dispersed, and silence and astonishment reigned in the palace.¹

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¹ Mig. i. 178.
Lac. i. 224.
Th. ii. 138,
141, 142.
Hist. Parl.
xv. 149, 157,
159. Bert.
de Moll. viii.
167, 177.
Campan, ii.
213. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. ii. 392,
393, 394.

During the terrors of this agitating day, the Queen and the Princess displayed the most heroic resolution. The whole royal family would, without doubt, have been massacred, had it not been for the presence of mind of Acloque, a colonel of the battalion of the Faubourg St Marceau, and of two cannoneers of the national guard, who interposed between them and the head of the columns, which had broken open or cut down with hatchets all the inner doors of the palace. "Sanction the decrees or death!" was the universal cry. Nothing could make the Queen separate herself from the King. "What have I to fear?" said she; "Death! It is as well to-day as to-morrow; they can do no more! Let me go to the King; it is at his side I will expire!—there is my post!" As they were retiring before the furious multitude, the Princess Elizabeth, as she held the King at a moment of the greatest danger embraced in her arms, was mistaken for the Queen, and loaded with maledictions. She forbade her attendants to explain the mistake, happy to draw upon herself the perils and opprobrium of her august relative.* Santerre shortly

73.
Heroic conduct of the
Queen and
Princess
Elizabeth.

* "Des forcenés s'élancent vers la sœur du Roi les bras levés; ils vont la

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after approached, and assured her she had nothing to fear ; that the people were come to warn, but not to strike. He handed her a red cap, which she put on the head of the Dauphin. The Princess-Royal, a few years older, was weeping at the side of the Queen ; but the infant, with the innocence of childhood, smiled at the scene by which he was surrounded, and willingly put on an enormous red cap, which was handed to him by a ferocious pikeman. He was only seven years of age, seated on a table before his mother, to whom he constantly turned, more in wonder than alarm, as the crowd pressed around them. The innocence and naïveté of childhood were strongly depicted on his smiling countenance. The Princess-Royal was in her fourteenth year. Her noble countenance and precocious beauty were only rendered more interesting by the melancholy which the events of the last few years had imprinted on her expression. Blue eyes, a prominent forehead, and light ringlets flowing over her shoulders, recalled, in the last days of the monarchy, the image of the young daughters of the Franks who adorned the throne of the first race of kings. She clung in terror to her mother, as if at once to give and receive protection. Even the most ferocious of the mob were for a moment subdued by the image of childhood, innocence, and misfortune.¹

¹ Lam. Hist. des Gir. ii. 401. Web. ii. 177. Lac. i. 244. Camp. ii. 213, 215.

74.
First appearance of Napoleon.

² Bour. i. 73.

A young officer, with his college companion, was a witness, from the gardens of the Tuileries, of this disgraceful scene. Though warmly attached at that period to the Jacobin party, he expressed great regret at the conduct of the populace, and the imbecility of the ministry ; but when the King appeared at the window with the cap of liberty on his head, he could no longer restrain his indignation.² "The wretches," he exclaimed ; "they should cut down the first five hundred with grape-

frapper des officiers du palais les dérompent. Le nom vénéré de Madame Elizabeth fait retomber leurs armes. " Ah ! que faites-vous ? " s'écrie douloureusement la princesse ; " laissez leur croire que je suis la Reine. En mourant à sa place, je l'aurais peut être sauvée ! " — LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, il.391.

shot, and the remainder would soon take to flight." He lived to put his principles in practice near that very spot—his name will never be forgotten: it was NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

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The events of the 20th June excited the utmost indignation throughout France. But no pity whatever was felt for the royal victims by the Girondist leaders. "How I should have liked to behold her long humiliation, and how her pride must have suffered under it!" exclaimed Madame Roland, speaking of Marie Antoinette. But generally over the country more generous feelings prevailed. The violence of their proceedings, the violation of the Assembly and of the royal residence, the illegality of a petition supported by a tumultuous and disorderly rabble, were made the objects of warm reproaches to the popular party. The Duc de la Rochefoucauld, who commanded at Rouen, invited the King to seek an asylum in the midst of his army; Lafayette urged him to proceed to Compiègne, and throw himself into the arms of the constitutional forces: the national guard offered to form a corps to defend his person. But Louis declined all these offers; he expected deliverance from the allied powers, and was unwilling to compromise himself by openly joining the constitutional party. He entertained hopes that the late disgraceful tumult would open the eyes of many of the popular party to the ultimate tendency of their measures. Nor were these hopes without foundation. The Girondists never recovered the failure of this insurrection. They lost the support of the one party by having attempted it, of the other by having failed in it. Mutual complaints in the Assembly, in the clubs, in the journals, between them and the Jacobins, laid the foundation of the envenomed rancour which afterwards prevailed between them. Every one was now anxious to throw upon another the disgrace of an infamous outrage which had failed in its object. A petition, signed by twenty thousand respectable persons in Paris, was soon after presented to the Assembly, praying them

75.
Indignation
of France at
the events of
June 20.

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¹ Deux
Amis, vii. 7,
12. Bert.
de Moll. viii.
185, 194.
Dumont,
353. Jom.
ii. 53. Th. ii.
144, 148,
149. Lac.
i. 246. Lam.
iii. 4.

76.
Lafayette
arrives at
Paris.
June 28.

to punish the authors of the late disorders ; but such was the terror of that body, that they were incapable of taking any decisive steps. The conduct of the King excited general admiration : the remarkable coolness in danger which he had evinced extorted the applause even of his enemies, and the unhappy irresolution of his earlier years was forgotten in the intrepidity of his present demeanour. Had he possessed vigour enough to have availed himself of the powerful reaction in his favour which these events excited, he might still have arrested the Revolution ; but his was the passive courage of the martyr which could endure, not the active spirit of the hero fitted to prevent or subdue danger.¹

Lafayette, who was now thoroughly awakened to a sense of the dreadful perils which threatened France from the Revolution which he had done so much to advance, made a last effort to raise from the dust the constitutional throne. Having provided for the command of the army, and obtained addresses from the soldiers against the recent excesses, he set out for Paris, and presented himself, on the 28th June, unexpectedly at the bar of the Assembly. He demanded, in the name of his troops and of himself, that the authors of the revolt should be punished ; that vigorous measures should be taken to destroy the Jacobin sect. “ A powerful reason,” said he, “ has brought me amongst you. The outrages committed on the 20th June in the Tuileries have excited the indignation and the alarm of all good citizens, and particularly of the army. In the one I command, all the officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates, have but one opinion. I have received from all the corps addresses, expressive of their attachment to the constitution, their respect for the authorities which it has established, and their patriotic hatred against all the factions. I lay at your bar these addresses. You will see that I have only expressed their unanimous opinion. I am convinced that their sentiments are those of all the French who love their country. It is time to save the constitution from the attacks which are so generally made

upon it; to secure to the National Assembly, to the King, their independence and their dignity; to take from bad citizens their hopes of establishing a régime which, for the good, would only be an insupportable tyranny. I supplicate the National Assembly to give directions that the instigators of the crimes committed on the 20th June at the Tuileries be prosecuted for high treason, and that measures be taken to destroy a sect which at once invades the national sovereignty, tyrannises over the citizens, and daily affords, in its public speeches, decisive evidence of the designs by which it is animated.”¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xv. 193, 200.

This speech was loudly applauded by the *Côté Droit* of the Assembly, and excited the utmost dismay in the revolutionary party. They dreaded the promptitude and vigour of their adversary in the Champ de Mars. A majority of 339 to 234 was obtained by the constitutional party in the Assembly, upon a motion to send Lafayette's letter to the standing committee of twelve, to report on its adoption. Encouraged by this success, slight as it was, the general next presented himself at the court. He was coolly received by the King, who thanked him for his services, but did nothing to forward his views. It was even with some difficulty that he succeeded in obtaining a review of the national guard. The leaders of the royalists anxiously inquired at the palace what course they should adopt in this emergency. Both the King and the Queen answered, that they could place no confidence in Lafayette. He next applied, with a few supporters who were resolved to uphold the crown in spite of itself, to the national guard; but the influence of the general with that body was gone. He was received in silence by all the battalions who had so recently worshipped his footsteps, and retired to his hotel despairing of the constitutional cause.²

77.
But fails in
rousing the
national
guard.² Toul. ii.
231. Hist.
Parl. xv.
204. Ma-
dame Cam-
pan, ii. 224.

Determined, however, not to abandon his enterprise without a struggle, he appointed a rendezvous in the evening at his own house, of the most zealous of the troops,

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VII.

1792.

78.

And returns
to the army
without ef-
fecting any-
thing.

from whence his design was to march against the Jacobin club, and close its sittings. Hardly thirty men appeared, and irresolution and uncertainty were painted on every countenance. In despair at the apathy of the public mind, Lafayette, after remaining a few days in Paris, set off alone, and returned to the army, after having incurred the disgrace, with one party, of endeavouring to control the Revolution, with the other, of having failed in the attempt—the usual fate of the originators of a popular movement when they strive to check its excesses. He was burned in effigy by the Jacobins in the Palais Royal, so recently the scene of his civic triumphs, and instantly became the object of the most impassioned hostility to the people. Robespierre answered his letter in a long and able production: the Jacobins thundered against his tergiversation: the people could not find words strong enough to express their indignation, “The traitor Lafayette!” was heard in every street: “he is sold to the Austrians; let him go to Coblenz!” This was the last struggle of the constitutionalists; thenceforward they never were heard of in the Revolution, except when their adherents were conducted to the scaffold. Their failure was the more remarkable, because, not a year before, they had acquired an absolute ascendant in Paris, and defeated an insurrection of the populace in a period of the highest public excitement, and on that very occasion they had a majority of three to two in the Assembly. In such convulsions, more perhaps than in any other situation of life, it may truly be said, that there is a tide in the affairs of men. The moment of success, if not seized, is lost for ever; new passions succeed; fresh interests are called into existence. Above all, no coercion by old leaders will ever be tolerated; and the leader of a nation at one period often finds himself, within a few months, as powerless as the humblest individual, the instant he attempts to restrain the passions he himself has aroused.¹

The Girondists and Republicans, emboldened by the failure of Lafayette’s attempt, now openly aimed at the

¹ Lac, 249, 250, Th. ii. 151, 155. Toul. i. 230, 231. Hist. Parl. xv, 205, 206. Journal des Jacobins, No. 211, 214, 216. Mig. i. 180.

dethronement of the King. Vergniaud, in a powerful discourse, portrayed the dangers which threatened the country. He quoted the article of the constitution which declared, "that if the King put himself at the head of an armed force against the nation, or did not oppose a similar enterprise attempted in his name, he should be held to have abdicated the throne." "O King!" he continued, "who doubtless thought with the tyrant Lysander, that truth is not more imperishable than falsehood, and that we amuse the people with oaths as we do children with toys; who feigned only to regard the laws, in order to preserve an authority which might enable you to brave them—do you suppose that we are any longer to be deceived by your hypocritical protestations? Was it to defend us that you opposed to the enemy's soldiers forces whose inferiority rendered their defeat inevitable? Was it to defend us that you suffered a general to escape who had violated the constitution? Did the law give you the choice of your ministers for our happiness or our misery? of your generals, for our glory or our shame? the right of sanctioning the laws, the civil list, and so many prerogatives, that you might destroy the constitution of the empire? No! One whom the generosity of the French could not affect, whom the love of despotism alone could influence, has obviously no regard for the constitution which he has so basely violated, for the people whom he has wantonly betrayed."—"The danger which threatens us," said Brissot, at the Jacobin club, "is the most extraordinary which has yet appeared in the world. Our country is in peril, not because it wants defenders, not because its soldiers are destitute of courage, not because its frontiers are unprotected, its resources defective; but because a hidden cause paralyses all its powers. Who is it that does so? A single man—he whom the constitution has declared its chief, and treachery has made its enemy. You are told to fear the King of Bohemia and Hungary: I tell you that the real strength of the kings is at the Tuileries, and

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1792.

79.

The Girondists openly aim at overturning the throne.

July 4.
Debates in the Assembly on that subject.

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xv. 280,
347, 349.
Journal des
Jacobins,
No. 217,
218.

that it is there you must strike to subdue them. You are told to strike the refractory priests wherever they are found in the kingdom : I tell you to strike at the court, and you will annihilate the whole priesthood at a single blow. You are told to strike the factious, the intriguers : I tell you, aim your blow at the royal cabinet, and there you will extinguish intrigue in the centre of its ramifications. This is the secret of our position : there is the source of our evils ; there is the point where a remedy is to be applied.”¹

80.
Country
declared in
danger.

July 8.

While the minds of men were wound up to the highest pitch by these inflammatory harangues, the committees, to whom it had been remitted to report on the state of the country, published the solemn declaration—“Citizens, the country is in danger!” Minute guns announced to the inhabitants of the capital the solemn appeal, which called on every one to lay down his life on behalf of the state. The enthusiasm of the moment was such, that fifteen thousand volunteers enrolled themselves in Paris in a single day. Immediately all the civil authorities declared their sittings permanent ; all the citizens not already in the national guard were put in requisition ; pikes were distributed to all those not possessed of fire-locks, battalions of volunteers formed in the public squares, and standards displayed in conspicuous situations, with the words, “Citizens, the country is in danger!” These measures, which the threatening aspect of public affairs rendered indispensable, excited the revolutionary ardour to the utmost degree. A universal frenzy seized the public mind. The declamations at the Jacobin club exceeded anything yet heard in audacity. A general insurrection was openly called for. “The all-powerful sovereign people,” it was said, “can alone exterminate our enemies. Against crowned brigands, home traitors, and devourers of men, we have need of the club of Hercules.” So far did this patriotic vehemence carry them that many departments openly defied the authority of government, and, without

any orders, sent their contingents to form the camp of twenty thousand men near Paris. This was the commencement of the revolt which overturned the throne. Some of the Girondist leaders, seeing to what point things were tending, began now to regret their former proceedings, and in secret inclined to the royal cause. Guadet in particular, whose inclinations strongly led him in that direction, had a private interview with the royal family, in which the simplicity and kindness of the King, the heroic spirit of the Queen, and the innocence of their children, completely softened his heart. Being shown the dauphin asleep in his cradle, he parted the light ringlets which half concealed his beautiful countenance, and said, with tears in his eyes, to the Queen—"Educate him in the principles of freedom, Madame : it is the condition of existence."¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xv. 345,
358. Jour-
nal des
Jacobins,
No. 230.
Mig. i. 183.
Th. ii. 159,
163, 184.
Lam. iii.
19, 20.

The approach of a crisis became evident on the 14th July, when a fête was held in commemoration of the taking of the Bastille. Pétion was the object of the public idolatry. He had been suspended from his office of mayor by the department of Paris, in consequence of his supineness during the tumult on the 20th June ; but the decree was reversed by the National Assembly. His name was inscribed on a thousand banners ; on all sides the cry was heard, "Pétion or death !" The King went in procession from the palace to the altar in the Champ de Mars ; but how different was his reception from that which he had experienced two years before on a similar occasion ! Pen- sive and melancholy, he marched with the Queen and the dauphin through a single file of soldiers, who could with difficulty keep back the intrusion, and were wholly unable to prevent the maledictions of the mob. Innumerable voices reproached him with his perfidious flight ; the intrepid aspect of the Swiss Guard alone protected him from actual violence. He returned to the palace in the deepest dejection, and was not again seen in public till he ascended the scaffold.²

81.
Fête of
14th July.

² Deux
Amis, viii.
72, 73. Mig.
i. 183. Lac.
i. 254. De
Stael, ii. 54
Bert. de
Moll. viii.
317, 320.

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VII.

1792.

82.

Vast accession of strength to the Revolutionary party from the rest of France.

The declaration by the Assembly that the country was in danger, procured a prodigious accession of power to the revolutionary party. On the 14th July, when the fête of the confederation was held, the persons who had arrived in the capital from the provinces did not exceed two thousand, but their numbers daily and rapidly increased. The solemn announcement put all France in motion. Multitudes of ardent young men hourly arrived from the provinces, all animated by the most vehement revolutionary fervour, who added to the already appalling excitement of the capital. The Assembly, with culpable weakness, gave them the exclusive use of its galleries, where they soon acquired the entire command of its deliberations. They were all paid thirty sous a-day from the public treasury, and formed into a club, which soon surpassed in democratic violence the far-famed meetings of the Jacobins. The determination to overturn the throne was openly announced by these ferocious bands; and some of the French Guards, whose regiment, disgraced by its treason at the attack on the Bastille, had been disbanded, were incorporated by the Assembly with their ranks. From their discipline and experience the insurgents soon acquired the elements of military organisation. Meanwhile measures were openly taken, which were best calculated to insure the success of the revolt. The attacks on Lafayette were multiplied; he was denounced at the clubs, and became the object of popular execration. A proposition brought forward in the Assembly, to have him indicted for high treason, was only postponed till the whole witnesses could be examined regarding his conduct. The war party was everywhere predominant. The whole jealousy of the Assembly was directed against the Court, from whom, aided by the Allies, they expected a speedy punishment for their innumerable acts of treason. By their orders, such battalions of the national guard as were suspected of a leaning towards the court, especially the grenadiers of the quarter of St Thomas, were jealously

watched ; the club of the Feuillants was closed ; the grenadiers and chasseurs of the national guard, who constituted the strength of the burgher force, were disbanded, and the troops of the line and Swiss Guard removed to a distance from Paris. The chiefs of the revolt met at Charenton ; but none could be brought to accept the perilous duty of leading the attack. Robespierre spoke with alarm of the dangers which attended it ; Danton, Collot d'Herbois, Billaud Varennes, and the other leaders of the popular party, professed themselves willing to second, but not fitted to head the enterprise. At length Danton, presented Westermann, a man of undaunted courage and savage character, who subsequently signalised himself in the War of La Vendée, and ultimately perished on the scaffold.¹

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1792.

¹ Deux
Amis, viii.
87, 88. Bert.
de Moll. viii.
347, 360.
Lac. i. 255,
261. Mig. i.
183. Th. ii.
192, 193,

PÉTION, mayor of Paris, was the person most formidable to the royal family at this period, as well from his official situation, which gave him the entire command of the physical force of the capital, as from his peculiar character. Unlike the other Girondists, he was a decided man of action ; but he veiled his violent designs under the mask of the most profound hypocrisy. Like all the leading men of his party, he was bred to the provincial bar, and was translated to the Legislative Assembly from the town of Chartres, where he had practised. Poor and needy, rapacious and unprincipled, he early shared in the largesses of the Orleans family, and entered thoroughly into the views of its conspirators. But, with his violent associates, he soon passed the designs of the selfish and irresolute prince who formed their head, and joined the conspiracy—not for dispossessing the family on the throne to the advantage of the house of Orleans, but for overturning it altogether. He had an agreeable exterior, much address, and profound dissimulation. Though not a powerful speaker, his calmness and judgment procured him a lead, and constituted the secret of his power. He organised a revolt, prepared a massacre, or ordered

83.
Character of
Pétion.

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VII.

1792.

assassinations, with as much *sang-froid* as a veteran general directs movements on the field of battle. When the work of destruction was in preparation, no anxiety on his countenance betrayed that he was privy to its preparation; when it began, he looked with apathy on the suffering it produced. He was a stranger alike to pity or remorse; virtue and vice, humanity and cruelty, were regarded by him as means to be alternately used to advance his purposes, which were private gain and public elevation.¹

¹ Montjoye,
Vie de Marie
Antoinette,
ii. 284, 287.

84.
Of Santerre.

SANTERRE, the redoubtable leader of the faubourg St Antoine, was an apt instrument in Pétion's hands to execute the designs which he had conceived. His influence in that revolutionary quarter was immense; a word from him at once brought forth its forests of pikemen and formidable cannoneers, so well known in all the worst periods of the Revolution. Lofty in stature, with a strong voice and an athletic figure, he possessed at the same time that ready wit and coarse eloquence which is often found to be the most powerful passport to the favour of the lowest class of the people. Vulgar and coarse in manners, and always foremost in the work of revolt, he became the object of unbounded horror to the royalists, who often suffered from his power. Still he was not destitute of good qualities. Unlike Pétion, he had a heart, though it was not easy in general to get at it. He engaged, and often took the lead, in many of the most violent revolutionary measures, but he was far from being of a cruel disposition. An unfortunate victim, of whatever party, generally found access to his pity; tears or affliction disarmed his hands. He was a blind fanatic in politics; but neither cruel in private, nor relentless in public measures.²

² Montjoye,
Vie de Marie
Antoinette,
ii. 286, 287.

85.
Dreadful
suspense
and anxiety
of the King
and Queen.

Assailed by so many dangers, both external and internal; without guards, and with an impotent ministry; destitute alike of the means of escape or defence, the King and Queen abandoned themselves to despair. In daily expectation of private assassination or open murder,

the state of suspense in which they were kept, from the 20th June till the final insurrection on the 10th August, was such that they had ceased to wish for life, and held by their station only from a sense of duty to their children. The Queen employed herself the whole day, and the greater part of the night, in reading; contrary to what was expected, her health became daily stronger as the danger increased. All feminine delicacy of constitution disappeared; not a vestige of nervousness was to be seen. She secretly made an under-vest, dagger-proof, for the King, which was with great difficulty, and by stealth, given to Madame Campan to be conveyed to him; but so closely was he watched by the national guard on duty in the palace, that it was three days before she got an opportunity of conveying it to him. When she did so, he said, "It is to satisfy the Queen that I have agreed to this: they will not assassinate me; they will put me to death in another way." Already he anticipated the fate of Charles I., and studied incessantly the history of that unhappy but noble-minded prince. "All my anxiety," said he to Bertrand de Molleville, "is for the Queen, my sister, and my children; for myself, I do not fear death! nay, I wish it; for it would increase the chances of safety to them if I am sacrificed. I will not attempt to escape, nor will I make resistance; if I did so I should probably fail, and certainly increase their dangers. My only hope is, that my death may prove their salvation!" "As for me," said the Queen, "I am a stranger; they will assassinate me. It will be a blessing; for it will relieve me from a painful life: but what will become of our poor children?" and with these words she burst into a flood of tears. But she was perfectly strong, and refused all antispasmodic remedies. "Don't speak to me of such things," said she: "when I

¹ Campan, ii. 216, 220.
Bert. de Moll. Mém. ii. 327.

them."¹

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VII.

1792.

86.

Indecision
and want of
preparation
of the Court.

The Court, surrounded by such dangers, and amidst the general dissolution of its authority, had no hope but on the approach of the allied armies. The Queen was acquainted with their proposed line of march ; she knew when they were expected at Verdun and the intervening towns—the unhappy princess hoped, at times, to be delivered in a month. All the measures of the Court were taken to gain time for their approach. In the meanwhile, the royal family laboured under such apprehensions of being poisoned, that they ate and drank nothing but what was secretly prepared by one of the ladies of the bed-chamber, and privately brought by Madame Campan after the viands prepared by the cook had been placed on the table. Great numbers of the royalists, with faithful devotion, daily repaired to the Tuileries to offer their lives to their sovereign, amidst the perils which were evidently approaching ; but though their motives command respect, the diversity of their counsels confirmed the natural irresolution of his character. Some were for transporting him to Compiègne, and thence, by the forest of Ardennes, to the banks of the Rhine ; others, amongst whom was Lafayette, besought him to seek an asylum with the army ; while Malesherbes strongly counselled his abdication, as the only chance of safety. Bertrand de Molleville strenuously recommended a retreat into Normandy, and all the arrangements were made to carry it into effect with every prospect of success ; but the King, on the 6th August, when it was to have been put in execution, decided against it, alleging that he would reserve it for the last extremity, and that till then it was too hazardous for the Queen and his family. In the midst of such distracting counsels, and in the presence of such evident dangers, nothing was done. A secret flight was resolved on one day, and promised every chance of success ; but, after reflecting on it for the night, the King determined to abandon that project, lest it should be deemed equivalent to a declaration of civil war.¹ Royalist

¹ Bert. de Moll. viii. 284, 300 ; and Mém. ii. 123, 129. Th. ii. 209, 213. Camp. ii. 125, 133, 230.

committees were formed, and every effort was made to arrest the progress of the insurrection—but all in vain. The Court found itself surrounded by a few thousand resolute gentlemen, who were willing to lay down their lives in its defence, but could not, amidst revolutionary millions, acquire the organisation requisite to insure its safety.

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The conspiracy, which was originally fixed for the 29th July, and afterwards for the 4th August, was postponed more than once, from the people not being deemed by the leaders in a sufficient state of excitement to insure the success of the enterprise. But this defect was soon removed, by the progress and injudicious conduct of the allied troops. The Duke of Brunswick broke up from Coblenz on the 25th of July, and advanced at the head of seventy thousand Prussians, and sixty-eight thousand Austrians and Hessians, into the French territory. His entry was preceded by a proclamation, in which he reproached “those who had usurped the reins of government in France with having troubled the social order, and overturned the legitimate government; with having committed daily outrages on the King and Queen; with having, in an arbitrary manner, invaded the rights of the German princes in Alsace and Lorraine, and proclaimed war unnecessarily against the King of Hungary and Bohemia.” He declared, in consequence, that the allied sovereigns had taken up arms to arrest the anarchy which prevailed in France; to check the dangers which threatened the throne and the altar; to give liberty to the King, and restore him to the legitimate authority of which he had been deprived—but without any intention whatever of individual aggrandisement; that the national guards would be held responsible for the maintenance of order till the arrival of the allied forces, and that those who dared to resist must expect all the rigour of military execution.¹ Finally, he warned the National Assembly, the municipality and city of Paris, that if they did not

87.

Advance
and procla-
mation of
the Duke of
Brunswick.

July 25.

¹ Bert. de
Moll. ix. 33,
36. Mig. i.
186. Hist.
Parl. xvi.
276, 281.

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forthwith liberate the King, and return to their allegiance, they should be held personally responsible, and answer with their heads for their disobedience ; and that, if the palace were forced, or the slightest insult offered to the royal family, an exemplary and memorable punishment should be inflicted, by the total destruction of the city of Paris.

88.

Impolicy of
this procla-
mation when
not followed
up by active
measures.

Had this manifesto been couched in more moderate language, and followed up by a rapid and energetic military movement, it might have had the desired effect : the passion for power might have been supplanted in the excited multitude by that of fear ; the insurrection crushed, like the subsequent ones of Spain and Poland were, before it had acquired the consistency of military power, and the throne of Louis, for a time at least, re-established. But coming, as it did, in a moment of extreme public excitation ; and enforced, as it was, by the most feeble and inefficient military measures, it contributed in a signal manner to accelerate the progress of the Revolution, and was the immediate cause of the downfall of the throne. The leaders of the Jacobins had no longer any reason to complain of the want of enthusiasm in the people. A unanimous spirit of resistance burst forth in every part of France ; the military preparations were redoubled, the ardour of the multitude was raised to the highest pitch. The manifesto of the allied powers was regarded as unfolding the real designs of the court and the emigrants. Revolt against the throne appeared the only mode of maintaining their liberties, or preserving their independence ; the people of Paris had no choice between victory and death. It is painful to think that the King so soon became the victim, in a great measure, of the apprehension excited by the language of the Allies, which differed so widely from what he had so wisely recommended. Even in the midst of his apprehensions, however, he never lost his warm love to his people : “ How soon,” he often exclaimed, “ would all these chagrins be forgotten, in the slightest return of their affection ! ”¹

¹ Mig. i. 186.
Toul. ii. 220.
Th. ii. 230.

The leaders of the different parties strove to convert this effervescence into the means of advancing their separate ambitious designs. They continued to meet in a committee of eight at Charenton, where all the measures for their common operations were discussed and resolved on. But though thus far united, there was a wide difference in the ulterior measures which they severally had in view. The Girondists were desirous of having the King dethroned by a decree of the Assembly, because, as they had acquired the majority in that body, that would have been equivalent to vesting supreme dominion in themselves ; but this by no means answered the views of the popular demagogues, who were as jealous of the Assembly as of the Crown, and aimed at overthrowing, at one blow, the legislature and the throne. Danton, Robespierre, Marat, Camille Desmoulins, Fabre d'Eglantine, and their associates, were the leaders of the popular insurrection, which was intended not only to destroy the King, but to overturn the Girondists and Assembly, and establish the multitude. The seeds of division, therefore, between the Girondists and the Jacobins, were sown from the moment that they combined together to overturn the monarchy : the first sought to establish the middle class and the Assembly on the ruins of the throne ; the last, to elevate the multitude by the destruction of both.¹

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1792.

89.

Views of the
leaders of the
Girondists and
Jacobins.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xvi. 269,
276. Deux
Amis, viii.
92, 93. Mir.
i. 187. Toul.
ii. 21.

The arrival of the federal troops from Marseilles, in the beginning of August, augmented the strength and confidence of the insurgents. The pretext employed for sending these bands to Paris, was to fraternise with the other citizens on occasion of the fête of the 14th July ; the real object was to get an armed force into the metropolis which might reanimate the fervour of the faubourgs, and overawe the national guard there, which was deemed too favourable to the court. It was at the instigation of Madame Roland that Barbaroux induced the departments of the south to send these formidable bands to the capital. They were fifteen hundred in number, almost all drawn

90.

Prepara-
tions for
the revolt.

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1792.

Aug. 3.

Aug. 8.

from the coasts of Piedmont, Provence, or Corsica, and in great part old soldiers or sailors accustomed to war. They were animated by the fierce passions and revengeful spirit of the south, worked up almost to frenzy by the revolutionary addresses and civic fêtes, which they had received when marching through France. Friends of Barbaroux and Isnard commanded these fearful bands; and their march through France is remarkable for having called forth the Marseillaise hymn, the well-known song of the Revolution.* On the 3d the sections were extremely agitated, and that of Mauconseil declared itself in a state of insurrection. The dethronement of the King was discussed with vehemence in all the popular clubs; and Pétion, with a formidable deputation, appeared at the bar of the Assembly, and demanded it in the name of the municipality and the sections. That body remitted the petition to a committee to report. On the 8th, a stormy discussion arose on the proposed accusation of Lafayette; but the constitutionalists threw it out by a majority of 406 to 224—so strongly confirmed was the majority in the legislature, on the very eve of a convulsion destined to overthrow both them and the throne! The clubs and the populace were to the last degree irritated at the acquittal of their former idol: all those who had voted with the

* The celebrated Marseillaise hymn, the “Rule Britannia” of the Revolution, arose out of the march of these ardent and ferocious bands of the south through the heart of France. It was first heard, out of the province where it was composed, among their enthusiastic ranks:—

“Allons, enfants de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé;
Contre nous de la tyrannie
L'étendard sanglant est levé.
Entendez-vous dans les campagnes
Mugir ces féroces soldats?
Ils viennent jusque dans vos bras
Égorger vos fils, vos compagnes!
Aux armes, citoyens! formez vos bataillons!
Marchons! qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons!”

It is easy to see, from these words, how large a share the invasion of the Allies had at this period in exciting the revolutionary ardour of France. They were composed by a young artillery officer at Strasbourg, named Rouget de Lille, who had been born at Lons-le-Saulnier in the Jura. Gifted at once with

majority were insulted as they left the hall ; and the streets resounded with cries against the Assembly, which had acquitted "the traitor Lafayette !" To such a length did the public effervescence proceed, that d'Espréménil, once the object of worship to the people, was attacked on the terrace of the Feuillants by the populace, on his return home from the Assembly, where he had given an unpopular vote, thrown down, and pierced with pikes in several places. With the utmost difficulty he was extricated from the hands of the assassins, by a detachment of the national guard which happened to be passing, and borne, streaming with blood, to the treasury. Pétion came past amidst the shouts of the mob, as he was carried in at the door, and approached to see if he still lived. "I, too," said d'Espréménil, "was once borne in triumph by the people ; you see what they have now done to me ! Anticipate your own fate !" ¹

On the 9th the effervescence was extreme : vast crowds traversed the streets with drums beating and banners flying, and the hall of the Assembly and palace were filled with multitudes. The constitutionalists complained of the insults to which they had been exposed on leaving the hall on the preceding day, and insisted that the Marseillais troops should be sent to the camp at Soissons.

poetical and musical talents, he became acquainted, when in garrison there, with the daughter and wife of Dietrich, mayor of Strasbourg, who largely shared in the enthusiasm of the Revolution. Under the combined influence of patriotism, love, poetry, military ardour and revolutionary fervour, the lines were the effusion of an ardent and excited mind, during the distress and alarms of the severe cold of February 1792. They were finished off in a single night, under Dietrich's roof, and repeated in the morning to the young woman whose inspiration had had so large a share in their production, who shed tears at hearing the heart-stirring strains. But they expressed with energy the feeling of the moment then general over France, and thence their rapid and astonishing success. From the humble house of Dietrich at Strasbourg they spread quickly over Alsace, then in a vehement state of excitement, and, being learnt by the Marseilles troops in their journey to Paris in the July following, were adopted by them as the *refrain* of their march, and so spread over all France. From being first heard from the federal troops who came up from Marseilles they acquired the name of the "Marseillaise," since so well known as the hymn of revolution all over the world.—See LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, ii. 413, 420.

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¹ Bert. de
Moll. ix. 20,
21. Toul. i.
224. Mig. i.
187. Th. ii.
237. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. ii. 411,
412.

91.
Violent ef-
fervescence
on the 9th
August.

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While the discussion on the subject was going forward, it was announced to the Assembly that one of the sections had declared, that if the dethronement was not pronounced on that day they would sound the tocsin, beat the *générale* at midnight, and march against the palace. Forty-seven out of the forty-eight sections of the capital had approved of this resolution, and declared their sittings permanent. The legislature required the authorities of the department of the Seine and of the city of Paris to maintain the public tranquillity. The first replied that they had every inclination, but did not possess the power to do so ; Pétion answered, in name of the latter, that as the sections had resumed their powers, his functions were reduced to mere persuasion. The Assembly separated without having done anything to ward off the coming blow. Already it had become apparent that the revolutionary constitution had prostrated the legislature not less than the throne ; that the boasted advantages of the representative system had disappeared ; and the mobs of the metropolis, as in the Greek democracies, had become the rulers of the state.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xvi. 375,
393, 399.
Toul. ii. 228.
Th. ii. 238,
239. Moni-
teur, Aug.
10.

92.
Description
of the Car-
rousel at
this period.

The court of the CARROUSEL, rendered immortal by the heroic conflict of which it soon became the theatre, and the frightful massacre in which that conflict terminated, was very different in 1792 from what it is at this time. The straight and noble façade of the Rue de Rivoli, the northern wing of the quadrangle which unites the Tuileries to the Louvre, projected and in part executed by the genius of Napoleon, did not exist. The Tuileries itself, with the long gallery of the Museum, which connects that palace with the Louvre, formed two sides of an incomplete quadrangle, which all the efforts of later times, until the accession of Louis Napoleon, have not been able entirely to finish. On the ground where the Rue de Rivoli now stands was placed the Salle du Manège, where the meetings of the Assembly were held, which was separated from the garden of the Tuileries by a wall, running in the line where the gilded rail of the garden is now placed. This hall was placed

near where the Rue de Castiglione now leads into the Place Vendôme ; it communicated with the palace by a long court or avenue, which entered the part of the gardens of the Tuileries next the palace, called the terrace of the Feuillants, by a large doorway. On the other side of the palace, where the vast Place of the Carrousel now stands, the difference in former times was still more striking. That space was then nearly filled with a great variety of narrow streets and courts, such as always grow up, if permitted, in the vicinity of a palace. The open part of the Place itself was of comparatively small extent, and was situated in that portion of the space within the quadrangle which was next to the palace. The buildings next it formed several courts, appropriated chiefly for lodgings to the different guards of the palace ; one, which was the largest, and situated in the middle, was called the Royal Court ; another, nearer the river, the Court of Princes, in which the royal stables were placed ; a third, on the northern side of the Rue St Honoré, was called the Court of the Swiss, from its containing the barracks of the Swiss guards ; and it had two entrances—one into the Place of the Carrousel, and one into the Rue de l'Echelle, which leads to the Rue St Honoré. Thus, upon the whole, the open space of the Carrousel was not a fourth part of what it now is ; and it was incomparably less capable of defence, from the number of entrances which led into it, and the variety of courts and lanes, under shelter of the buildings of which the columns of attack might be formed.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xv. 145 ; xvi.
451, 452.

At length, at midnight on the 9th August, a cannon was fired, the tocsin sounded, and the *générale* beat in every quarter of Paris. The insurgents immediately began to assemble in great strength at their different rallying-points. The survivors of the bloody catastrophe which was about to commence have portrayed in the strongest colours the horrors of that dreadful night, when the oldest monarchy in Europe fell. The incessant clang of the tocsin, the rolling of the drums, the rattling of artillery

93.
Insurrection of the
10th Aug.

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and ammunition-waggons along the streets, the cries of the insurgents, the march of columns, rang in their ears for long after, and haunted their minds even in moments of festivity and rejoicing. The club of the Jacobins, that of the Cordeliers, and the section of Quinze-Vingts, in the Faubourg St Antoine, were the three centres of the insurrection. The most formidable forces were assembled at the club of the Cordeliers ; the Marseillais troops were there, and the vigour of Danton gave energy to all their proceedings. "It is no longer time," said he, "to appeal to the laws and legislators : the laws have made no provision for such offences, the legislators are the accomplices of the criminals. Already they have acquitted Lafayette ; to absolve that traitor is to deliver us to him, to the enemies of France, to the sanguinary vengeance of the allied kings. This very night the perfidious Louis has chosen to deliver to carnage and conflagration the capital which he is prepared to quit in the moment of its ruin. To arms ! to arms ! no other chance of escape is left to us." The insurgents, and especially the Marseillais, impatiently called for the signal to march ; and the cannon of all the sections began to roll towards the centre of the city.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xvi. 400,
415. De
Staël, Rév.
France. ii.
61. Bert.
de Moll. ix.
81, 84. Lac.
i. 264. Th.
ii. 214, 216.

94.
Prepara-
tions of
the Court.

Aug. 7.

Aware of their danger, the Court had for some time been making such preparations as their slender means would admit to resist the threatened attack. All the sentinels in and around the palace were tripled ; barriers had been erected at the entry of the court, and forty grenadiers of the section Filles de St Thomas, and as many gendarmes on horseback, were drawn up opposite the great gate. But these precautions were as nothing against an insurgent city. The only real reliance of the royal family was on the firmness of the Swiss Guards, whose loyalty, always conspicuous, had been wrought up to the highest pitch by the misfortunes and noble demeanour of the King and Queen. The Assembly had, a few days before, ordered them to be removed from Paris ; but the ministers, on various pretexts, had contrived to delay the execution of

the order, though they had not ventured to bring to the defence of the palace the half of the corps, which lay at Courbevoie. The number of the guard actually in attendance was about eight hundred ; they took their stations, and were soon drawn up in the court of the Carrousel in the finest order, and with that entire silence which formed so marked a contrast to the din and strife of tongues in the city forces. The most faithful of the national guard rapidly arrived, in number about four thousand five hundred, and filled the court of the Tuileries ; the grenadiers of the quarter of St Thomas had been at their post even before the signal of insurrection was given. Seven or eight hundred royalists, chiefly of noble families, filled the interior of the palace, determined to share the dangers of their sovereign ; but their presence rather injured than promoted the preparations for defence. A motley group, without any regular uniform, variously armed with pistols, sabres, and firelocks, they were incapable of any useful organisation ; while their presence cooled the ardour of the national guard, by awakening their ill-extinguished jealousy of the aristocratic party. The most generous of the friends of the royal family hastened to share their dangers, now that they had become imminent ; among whom was the Duchesse de la Maillé, whose principles had led to her being regarded with distrust by the court at the commencement of the Revolution ; but who now hastened on foot, unattended, to the gates of the palace, to share their fate.* The heavy dragoons, nine hundred strong, on horseback, with twelve pieces of artillery, were stationed in the gardens and court ; but in that formidable arm the royalists were deplorably inferior to the forces of the insurgents.¹ The troops on the royal side were numerous, but little reliance could be placed on

¹ Campan, ii. 217, 218.
Weber, ii. 241. Lac. i. 265, 266.
Th. ii. 243.
Mig. i. 189.
Hist. Parl. xvi. 433.

* “ La foule l'écartait comme une insensée. ‘Laissez-moi aller,’ s'écriait-elle, ‘là où l'amitié et le devoir m'appellent. Les femmes n'ont-elles pas aussi leur honneur ! C'est leur cœur ! Le mien est à la Reine ! Votre patriotisme est de la haïr : le mien est de mourir à ses pieds.’ ”—LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, iii. 151.

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a great proportion of them ; and the *gendarmérie à cheval*, a most important force in civil conflicts, soon gave a fatal example of disaffection, by deserting in a body to the enemy. This powerful corps was chiefly composed of the former French Guards, who had thus the infamy, twice during the same convulsions, of betraying at once their sovereign and their oaths.

95.
Infamous
treachery
and dissimu-
lation of
Pétion.

Pétion arrived at midnight, and inspected the posts of the palace—ostensibly to examine into the preparations for defence, really to be enabled to report to the insurgents how they might be best overcome. The grenadiers of the Filles de St Thomas, by whom he was attended in the palace, had resolved to detain him as a hostage ; but the Assembly, playing into his hands, eluded this intention by ordering him to the bar of the Assembly, to give an account of the state of the capital. No sooner was he there, than they ordered him to repair to his post—not at the Tuileries, which was threatened, but at the Hôtel de Ville, which was the headquarters of the insurgents. The object of this was soon apparent. While this was going on at the Assembly and in the palace, the whole forty-eight sections of Paris had appointed commissioners, who had met at the Hôtel de Ville, supplanted the former municipality, democratic as it was, and elected a new one, still more revolutionary, in its stead. When Pétion arrived there at six o'clock in the morning, he found the new municipality installed in power ; and he suffered himself, without the slightest opposition, to be made prisoner by the civil force there. Still carrying on his detestable system of hypocrisy, he next issued an order, as mayor of Paris, though his powers as such were at an end, summoning Mandat, the commander of the national guard, a man of honour and courage, to repair to the Hôtel de Ville, without making him aware of the change which had taken place in the municipality. In obedience to the civil authority, and wholly ignorant of the fraud which had been practised, that gallant officer

went there ; he was immediately seized by order of the authorities, and accused of having ordered his troops to fire upon the people. Perceiving from the new faces around him that the magistracy was changed, he turned pale ; he was instantly sent under a guard to the Abbaye, but murdered by the populace on the very steps of the municipal palace. The new municipality forthwith gave the command of the national guard to the brewer Santerre, the leader of the insurgents.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xvi. 409,
431. Camp.
ii. 240, 242.
Weber, ii.
217, 218.
Mig. i. 190.
Toul. ii. 233.
Th. ii. 249.

The death of Mandat was an irreparable loss to the royal cause, as his influence was indispensable to persuade the national guards to fight, who had become already much shaken by the appearance of so many royalists among the defenders of the King. At five in the morning the King visited the interior parts of the palace, accompanied by the Queen, the Dauphin, and Madame Elizabeth. The troops in the inside were animated with the best spirit, and the hopes of the royal family began to revive ; but they were cruelly undeceived on descending the staircase, and passing in review the forces in the Place Carrousel and the garden. Some battalions, particularly those of the Filles de St Thomas and the Petits Pères, received them with enthusiasm : but, in general, the troops were silent and irresolute ; and some, particularly the cannoneers and the battalion of Croix Rouge, raised the cry of “Vive la Nation !” Two regiments of pikemen, in defiling before the King, openly shouted, “Vive la Nation !” “Vive Pétion ! A bas le Veto, à bas le Traître !” Overcome by these ominous symptoms, the King returned, pale and depressed, to the palace. The Queen displayed the ancient spirit of her race. “Everything which you hold most dear,” said she to the grenadiers of the national guard, “your homes, your wives, your children, depends on our existence. To-day, our cause is that of the people.” These words, spoken with dignity, roused the enthusiasm of the troops who heard them to the highest degree ;

96.

Irresolution
of the na-
tional guard.

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but they could only promise to sacrifice their lives in her defence ; nothing announced the enthusiasm of victory. Though the air of the King was serene, despair was fixed in his heart. He was dressed in violet-coloured velvet, the mourning of the royal family, and his appearance sufficiently showed he had not been in bed all night. He had no apprehensions for himself, and had refused to put on the shirt of mail which the Queen had formed to avert the stroke of an assassin. "No," replied he, "in the day of battle the King should be clothed like the meanest of his followers." But he could not be prevailed upon to seize the decisive moment. Nothing is more certain than that, if he had charged at the head of his followers when the Swiss Guard had repulsed the insurgents, he would have put down the insurrection, and possibly, even at the eleventh hour, restored the throne.¹

¹ Campan, ii. 242, 244.
Weber, ii. 217, 219.
Toul. ii. 236.
Mig. i. 190.
Lac. i. 267.
Th. ii. 252, 253, 255.

97.
Vast preparations of the insurgents.

While irresolution and despondency prevailed at the Tuileries, the energy of the insurgents was hourly increasing. Early in the morning they had forced the arsenal, and distributed arms among the multitude. A column of the Faubourg St Antoine, composed of fifteen thousand men, joined by that of the Faubourg St Marceau, five thousand strong, had marched towards the palace at six in the morning, and was every moment increasing on the road. A post, placed by order of the directory of the department on the Pont Neuf, had been forced, and the communication between the opposite banks of the river was open. Soon after, the advanced guard of the insurrection, composed of the troops from Marseilles and Brittany, had debouched by the Rue St Honoré, and occupied the Place Carrousel, with their cannon directed against the Palace. Rœderer, in this emergency, exerted himself to the utmost to do his duty. He first petitioned the Assembly for authority to treat with the insurgents, but they paid no regard to his application. When the deputies from the palace arrived at the

Assembly, he found the members quietly engaged in a discussion on the treatment *of the negroes in St Domingo*. They represented in vivid colours the dangers of the royal family; but with haughty indifference the Assembly passed to the order of the day. Rœderer next applied to the national guard, and read to them the articles of the constitution, which enjoined them, in case of attack, to repel force by force. Part answered with loud acclamations; but a slender proportion of them only seemed disposed to support the throne; and the cannoneers, instead of an answer, unloaded their pieces. Finding the popular cause everywhere triumphant, he returned in dismay to the palace.¹

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¹ Montjoye, Vie de Marie Antoinette, ii. 80, 81. Récit de Pétion, Hist. Parl. xvi. 437, 440. De Rœderer, Ibid. 447, 454. Lac. i. 267. Lam. Hist. des Gir. iii. 156, 157.

The King was there sitting in council with the Queen and his ministers. Rœderer immediately announced that the danger was extreme; that the insurgents would agree to no terms; that the national guard could not be relied on; that the destruction of the royal family was inevitable, if they did not take refuge in the bosom of the Assembly; and that in a quarter of an hour retreat would be impossible. Louis said nothing: he feared not for himself; but the thought of the destruction that, in the event of defeat, awaited his wife and children, paralysed every resolution to resist. "I would rather," said the Queen, "be nailed to the walls of the palace than leave it!" and immediately addressing the King, and presenting to him a pistol, exclaimed, "Now, Sire, this is the moment to show yourself." The King remained silent: he had the resignation of a martyr, but not the spirit of a hero. "Are you prepared, Madame," said Rœderer, "to take upon yourself the responsibility of the death of the King, of yourself, of your children, and of all who are here to defend you?" Every one was silent for a time, when M. Montjoye said—"Let us go, and no longer deliberate: honour commands it: the safety of the state requires it: let us forthwith go to the Assembly." These words decided Louis: he rose up,

98,
The King leaves the palace, and joins the Assembly.

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and addressing himself to those around him, said, "Gentlemen, nothing remains to be done here." Accompanied by the Queen, the Dauphin, and the royal family, he descended the stair and crossed the garden, protected by the Swiss Guards, and the battalions of the Filles de St Thomas and the Petits Pères. These faithful troops had the utmost difficulty in getting them into the Assembly in the adjoining street, amidst the menaces and execrations of the multitude. "No women! the King alone!" was heard on all sides as they pressed through the dense throng on the terrace of the Feuillants. Such was the pressure, that one of the national guard carried the Dauphin in his arms; and it was only by great exertions of strength and resolution that actual violence was averted from the royal family. The day was fine; the sun shone with uncommon brilliancy on the royal family as they passed through the gardens. The leaves, however, were beginning to fall, and the King observing it, when they came under the trees, said to those around him,—“The leaves have begun to fall very early this season.” Manuel had written, some days before, that royalty would not endure in France till the leaves fell. The Dauphin was amused with the scene, but the Queen was in extreme depression, and amidst her grief was robbed of her purse and her watch on the passage. “Gentlemen,” said the King, on entering the Assembly, “I am come here to save the nation from the commission of a great crime; I shall always consider myself, with my family, safe in your hands.”—“Sire,” replied the President, Vergniaud, “you may rely on the firmness of the National Assembly; its members have sworn to die in defence of the rights of the people, and of the constituted authorities; it will remain firm at its post; we will die rather than abandon it.” In truth, the Girondists, having gained from the insurrection their real object of humbling the King, were now sincere in their wish to repress the multitude¹—a vain attempt, which

¹ Montjoye, ii. 64, 65.
Campan, ii. 246. Lac, i. 267, 269.
Weber, ii. 225, 226.
Hist. Parl. xvi. 461, 463. Lam, iii. 182.

only showed their ignorance of mankind, and total unfitness to guide during the stormy days of a revolution.

Meanwhile the new municipality, organised by Danton and Robespierre, was directing all the movements of the insurrection. A formidable force occupied the side of the Place Carrousel next the Louvre, and numerous pieces of artillery were pointed against the palace, the defenders of which were severely weakened by the detachment of the Swiss Guard and the royalist battalions, who had accompanied the King. The *gendarmérie à cheval*, posted in front of the palace, had shamefully quitted their post, crying "Vive la Nation!" the national guard was so divided as to be incapable of action; the cannoneers had openly joined the enemy; but, with heroic firmness, the Swiss Guard remained unshaken in resolution amidst the defection of all around them. After the retreat of the King, however, these brave men were left without any orders in the most dreadful of all situations, threatened by thirty thousand armed insurgents, in a state of unprecedented exasperation, in their front, and yet with too strong a sense of honour to recede. The insurgents, led by Santerre, and preceded by fifty pieces of artillery, now advanced against them at the Carrousel. Their officers anxiously asked for orders: "Not to let yourselves be forced," was the reply of the Maréchal de Maillé. Meanwhile, the porters at the gates of the railing were so intimidated that they opened the royal doorway to the Marseillais, who rushed up the great stair sword in hand, and ascended to the royal chapel. Anxious to avoid a conflict in which their own ruin, as in most civil conflicts, was certain, whichever side was victorious, the Swiss successively put forward five sentinels to guard the top of the stair, each of whom in his turn was seized, disarmed, and beaten to death with clubs before the eyes of their comrades. A single musket was now discharged from one of the windows of the chateau.¹ Whilst the struggle was going on, one of the Swiss

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99.

Desperate
fight in the
Place Car-
rousel.

¹ Réci de
Col. Pfyffer,
Col. de la
Garde Suis-
se. Weber,
i. 552, 563.
Hist. Parl.
xvi. 455,
456. Deux
Amis, viii.
181, 182.
Lam. iii.
201.

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officers tried to address the insurgents, but frightful howlings drowned his voice. A minute after, the bands of Santerre fired a volley at the Swiss and the grenadiers of the Filles de St Thomas, who immediately returned the fire, and the action became general.

100.
Massacre of
the Swiss.

Never was seen, in a more striking manner than then appeared, the superiority of order and discipline against the greatest numerical amount of physical force. The Swiss troops, firing from the windows, speedily drove back the foremost of their enemies ; immediately after, descending the staircase, and ranging themselves in battle array in the court of the Carrousel, by heavy and sustained discharges they completed their defeat. The insurgents, recently so audacious, fled in confusion as far as the Pont Neuf, and many never stopped till they had reached their homes in the faubourgs. Seven guns were taken and brought back by the Swiss to the foot of the great stair. Three hundred horse, at that critical moment, might have saved the monarchy. Had the eighteen hundred of the Constitutional Guard been there, the victory would have been complete. But the heroic defenders of the palace, few in number and destitute of cavalry, could not follow up their victory beyond the Carrousel ; and their leaders, in the absence of the King, did not venture to take any steps for completing their victory. The nobles who surrounded the Marshal de Maille entreated him to take advantage of the momentary success to unite the troops in the chateau to those on the terrace of the Feuillants, who had formed the escort of the King, to form a junction with the two hundred Swiss left in the barracks of the Courbevoie, place the royal family in the middle of their serried ranks, and march out of Paris. For a short time it was hoped the proposal would be adopted, and every eye was turned from the windows of the palace to the doors of the Salle du Manège, where the Assembly sat, in hope of seeing the King issue forth and join the cortège. But his known

irresolution forbade the adoption of so decided a course ; and meanwhile, seeing they were not attacked, the populace gradually regained their courage, and a new assault, directed by Westermann, was prepared under cover of a numerous artillery. The Marseillais and Breton troops returned in greater force ; the Swiss were mown down with grape-shot, and their ranks fell in the place where they stood, unconquered even in death. In its last extremity, it was neither in its titled nobility, nor its native armies, that the French throne found fidelity ; but in the freeborn mountaineers of Lucerne, unstained by the vices of a corrupted age, and firm in the simplicity of rural life.¹

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¹ Lac. i. 271,
273. Toul.
ii. 252, 253.
Deux Amis,
viii. 182,
183. Hist.
Parl. xvi.
456. Weber,
ii. 563.
Lam. iii.
207.

At this critical moment, when the Swiss, still unconquered, were combating where they stood, M. d'Hervilly, who with heroic courage, and in the midst of a thousand dangers, had penetrated from the hall of the Assembly to the scene of conflict, with orders from the King to terminate the resistance, reached, blinded and wounded, the foot of the great stair, and gave them orders to cease firing, and withdraw to the Assembly. "Yes, brave Swiss!" cried the Baron de Vioménil, "go to save your King : your ancestors have often done so." Conceiving they were called elsewhere to defend the person of the monarch, the Swiss drummers beat the "assemblée," and the faithful mountaineers took their places in their ranks with the precision of a parade, under a terrible fire of grape and musketry. They withdrew under the archway of the Tuileries, and bent their course by the terrace of the Feuillants towards the Assembly. But the loss was dreadful as they crossed the gardens. The pursuers, emboldened by their retreat, pressed them on all sides with a murderous fire, to which the Swiss, now in serried ranks, could make no reply. Three hundred fell in a few minutes. Soon it was no longer a battle, but a massacre ; the enraged multitude broke into the palace, and cut down every one found within it ; the fugitives, pursued

101.
Capture and
sack of the
palace.

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1792.

¹ Scott's
Paris Re-
visited, 291.
Personal
knowledge.
Récit de
Pfyffer.
Weber, ii.
564, 565.
Duval,
Souv. de la
Terreur, ii.
124, 125.
Bert. de
Moll. Mém.
ii. 276.

into the gardens of the Tuileries by the pikemen from the faubourgs, were unmercifully put to death under the trees, amidst the fountains, and at the feet of the statues. Some miserable wretches climbed up the marble monuments which adorn that splendid spot; the insurgents abstained from firing lest they should injure the statuary, but pricked them with their bayonets till they came down, and then murdered them at their feet—an instance of taste for art, mingled with revolutionary cruelty, perhaps unparalleled in the history of the world. During the whole evening and night, the few survivors of the Swiss Guard were sought out with un pitying ferocity by the populace, and wherever they were found immediately massacred. Hardly any escaped, and those that did so owed their lives almost uniformly to the fidelity of female attachment.¹

102.
Dethrone-
ment of the
King.

While these terrible scenes were going forward, the Assembly was in the most violent agitation. When the King first entered, he was received in general with respect—the evident fall of the royal family had softened the hardest hearts. But nothing could move the painter David. Having recognised him on a bench adjoining, the King asked him if the portrait he was engaged on, of him, would be soon done. “I will never hereafter paint the portrait of a tyrant,” replied David, “till his head falls on the scaffold.” Large tears stood on the cheeks of the Duchesse d’Angoulême; but the Dauphin, with infantine simplicity, was amused by the scene going forward, and asked his father the names of the principal members around him. But when the firing began, every heart was frozen with horror. At the first discharge of musketry, the King declared that he had forbidden the troops to fire, and signed an order to the Swiss Guards to stop the combat: but the officer who bore it was slain on the road. As the firing grew louder, the consternation increased, and many deputies rose to escape; but others exclaimed, “No! this is our post.” The people in the galleries

drowned the speakers by their cries, and soon the loud shouts, "Victoire, victoire!—les Suisses sont vaincus!"* announced that the fate of the monarchy was decided. In the first tumult of alarm, the Assembly published a proclamation, recommending moderation in the use of victory. A deputation from the new municipality shortly after appeared at the bar, demanding that their powers should be confirmed, and insisting on the dethronement of the King, and the immediate convocation of a National Convention. They were received with thunders of applause, and said, with a stern voice, "Pronounce the dethronement of the King; to-morrow we will bring the act in form. Pétion, Manuel, and Danton are our colleagues; Santerre is at the head of the armed force." Other deputations speedily followed, pressing the same demands, and enforcing them with the language of conquerors. Yielding to necessity, the Assembly, on the motion of Vergniaud, passed a decree suspending the King, dismissing the ministers, and directing the immediate formation of a National Convention. The municipality was irresistible: it had usurped the sovereignty of the state, and the legislature was only a puppet in its hands.¹

August 10.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xvii. i. 54.
Moniteur,
Aug. 11.
Mig. i. 195.
Toul. ii.
252, 256.
Deux Amis,
vii. 186, 192.
Lac. i. 272.
Lam. iii.
190, 191.

The secret committee at the Hôtel de Ville, who organised this insurrection, and directed its movement after the new municipality was installed in power, consisted of Danton, Camille Desmoulins, Fabre d'Eglantine, Manuel, Panis, Osselin, Marat, Fréron, Tallien, Duplace, Billaud Varennes, Robespierre, Collot d'Herbois, Durfort, Cailly, Chénier, Leclerc, and Legendre. Chabot and Bazire were deeply implicated in the previous proceedings; but they were in the Assembly, and not in the insurrectionary committee. This list is important in a general point of view—it demonstrates that the Girondists, though they were the leaders, in the previous steps of the conspiracy at Charenton, which organised the insurrection,

103.
Who were
the leaders
of the insur-
rection.

* "Victory, victory! the Swiss are vanquished!"

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VII.

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xvii. 54.
Toul. ii. 257.
Peltier,
Rév. de 10
Août, 74, 79.

yet took little part in its execution. Some were apprehensive of proceeding to such extremities, or had become alarmed at the conduct of their Jacobin allies; others had not energy enough to engage in the active part of the strife; many wished only to intimidate the crown, by the threat of insurrection, into restoring them to office and the direction of government. The insurrection of 20th June was their work, and illustrated their designs and objects; the revolt of the 10th August was the work of the Jacobins, who had already passed them in the career of revolution, and who never rested till they brought them all to the scaffold.¹

104.
Frightful
massacres
by which
the victory
of the in-
surgents
was stained.

Imagination itself can conceive nothing so dreadful as the vengeance which the infuriated and victorious mob took on the remnant of the Swiss Guard which survived the action, and the whole royalists and faithful national guards who had combated in defence of the palace. An immense multitude, of above thirty thousand persons, all armed, and in the most vehement state of excitement, broke into the palace, ransacked every room, or pursued with relentless fury the Swiss, who, now broken and dispersed, were seeking refuge singly, or two and three together, in the adjoining houses and streets. Almost all the royalist nobles in the palace were massacred. Pursuing them from room to room, they broke open the doors, smashed to pieces the mirrors, ransacked the cellars, pillaged the furniture, and strewed the floors with dead bodies. The whole valets and porters who did not succeed in throwing themselves out of the windows were put to death. Many deeds of individual heroism, in the last agonies of the monarchy, were done by its noble defenders. M. Sallas and M. Marchais, two of the gentlemen-ushers of the palace, when the mob broke in, refused to abandon their posts in one of the inner doors, and died in maintaining it. "Here is our post," said they to the infuriated Marseillais: "we will fall on the threshold we have sworn to defend." They were imme-

diately pierced with pikes. M. Diet, the usher of the Queen's chamber, resolutely made good the doorway for some minutes against a multitude of assailants, and when he fell, his body for a few seconds obstructed the entrance. The Princess of Tarentum, hearing his fall, herself went to open the door to the Marseilles bands, holding the young Pauline de Tourzel, whom her mother had intrusted to her when she went with the royal family to the Assembly, in her hand. "Strike me," said she, "but save the honour and life of this young girl, intrusted to me by her mother." Struck with the generosity of her conduct, the insurgents saved both, and even assisted them to step over the heaps of slain which filled the passage. But these isolated acts of heroism could have no general effect. In half an hour the palace was in flames; the savage multitude attacked the fire-brigade, which was hastening to extinguish the conflagration, and it was only by reiterated orders from the Assembly that they were at last suffered to advance, and succeeded in putting it out. Many of the early and firm friends of the Revolution perished on this occasion. Among the rest was M. Clermont Tonnerre, who became the victim of a report falsely spread among the populace, that his hotel contained a depot of arms. It was searched, and none were found; but the assassins, who had orders to destroy him, shot him in the mouth as he was haranguing the people in his defence; and his remains were instantly so disfigured by the mob, that they were known by his young wife only by the boots which he wore.¹

Fiends in the form of women were here, as ever in the Revolution, foremost in deeds of cruelty. Théroigne de Méricourt, armed as a hussar, was among the first to commence them. She seized Suleau, a young royalist writer, who in the hour of its misfortune had supported the falling side, and delivered him to the assassins by whom she was surrounded, who instantly cut off his head and paraded it on a pike through the streets. The

¹ Deux Amis, viii. 186, 187. Prudhom. Crimes de la Rév. iv. 68, 69. Duval, Souv. de la Terreur, ii. 126, 129. Lam. iii. 227, 228.

105. Revolting cruelty of the women.

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VII.

1792.

head of Vigier, one of the *gardes-du-corps*, who had defended himself with almost supernatural vigour, was also put on a pike, and carried about. The sight of these ghastly remains excited such a thirst for blood, especially in the female part of the mob, that all restraint was speedily at an end. With inexpressible fury they threw themselves on the wounded Swiss, cut their throats as they lay bleeding on the ground, tore out their hearts and their entrails, which they carried about in triumph on pikes, with the gory heads, through all the adjacent streets. The Cour des Suisses was entirely covered with the mangled remains of these noble defenders of the monarchy, weltering in a sea of blood, and mutilated by French women in a way which civilised depravity, joined to savage barbarity, could alone have conceived. Nor did their ferocity stop there. They cut off legs and arms of the dead Swiss, roasted them, and ate cutlets made of the flesh: while others stripped the bodies naked, anointed them with oil, and threw them into huge frying-pans, to serve as a repast to a circle of cannibals.* Almost all the Swiss porters in the hotels of the city were murdered by savage bands who traversed the streets after the action was over. Above five thousand persons perished in this dreadful massacre, among whom must be included two hundred of

* "On a vu des femmes dépouiller, égorger des Suisses désarmés, leur mutiler tous les membres, leur arracher les intestins, et leur couper les parties viriles, qu'elles portaient ensuite au bout d'une pique." *Histoire de la Révolution, par deux Amis de la Liberté*, viii. 106. (A republican work.)

"Le sang ruisselait partout. Dépouillés aussitôt qu'égorvés, ces corps sans vie ajoutaient à l'horreur de leur aspect le spectacle des nombreuses mutilations, que la pensée peut comprendre, mais que la pudeur défend de retracer. Et c'étaient des femmes qui avaient exécuté sur ces cadavres-là étendus ces dégoûtantes mutilations."—DUVAL, *Souvenirs de la Terreur*, ii. 129. (An eye-witness.)

"Des femmes ivres coupaient les génitoires d'un Suisse, et les enveloppaient dans un mouchoir pour les porter chez elles.—D'autres femmes graissèrent des cadavres nus, les exposèrent au feu des cuisines, et dans leur brutale ivresse, se vantèrent d'avoir accommodé un Suisse comme on apprête un maquereau.

La plupart de ces atrocités furent commises par des femmes. On invitait ses amis, comme les sauvages d'Amérique, avec les mots, 'Ici au soir nous mangerons un Jésuite.'" PREDHOMME, *Crimes de la Révolution*, iv. 69. (A contemporary Republican writer.)

the mob, who died of drinking the intoxicating liquors in the cellars of the palace. Above three thousand of the insurgents had fallen, before victory declared in their favour. The bodies of the slain were heaped up in huge piles in the court of the Carrousel, and along the quays, and burned with furniture taken out of the palace and of the Swiss barracks, which had been thrown out of the windows. But though these scenes of horror were going on around the palace, and the waters of the Seine reflected the lugubrious light of the funeral-piles, the theatres were all full, and the ladies in their richest attire were seen crowding to the public places as on a day of festivity in a time of profound peace.¹

The 10th August was the last occasion on which the means of saving France were placed in the hands of the King; but there can be little doubt that, had he possessed a firmer character, he might even then have accomplished the task. The great bulk of the nation was disgusted with the excesses of the Jacobins, and the outrage of the 20th June had excited a universal feeling of horror. If he had acted with vigour on that trying occasion, repelled force by force, and seized the first moment of victory to proclaim as enemies the Jacobins and the Girondists, who had a hundred times violated the constitution,—dissolved the Assembly, closed the clubs, and arrested the leaders of the revolt, that day might possibly have re-established the royal authority. But that conscientious prince never imagined that the salvation of his kingdom was indissolubly connected with his private safety; and he preferred exposing himself to certain destruction, to the risk of shedding blood in the attempt to avert it.* Nothing can be more certain than that, if the other half of the Swiss Guard who lay at Ruel and

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¹ Duval,
Souv. de la
Terreur, ii.
129. Deux
Amis, viii.
186. Prud-
hom. Crimes
de la Rév.
iv. 67, 69.
Lam. iii.
194, 195,
243, 246.

106.
Small addi-
tional force
which would
have saved
the mon-
archy.

* “A cet instant quand les Suisses déblayaient la Cour du Carrousel, si le Roi, monté à cheval, précédé et suivi des Suisses et des Grénadiers Nationaux, eût parcouru les environs du château, son trône existerait peut-être encore, la monarchie constitutionnelle était maintenue, et les conjurés n’avaient que la fuite pour éviter l’échafaud; mais il était à l’Assemblée.”—*Deux Amis*, viii. 183.

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1792.

Courbevoie had been brought up to the scene of action, the insurgents would have been defeated ; and the same result would have happened if the faithful Constitutional Guard had remained, or even if the nine hundred *gendarmes à cheval* had proved faithful to their oaths. It was the defection of the national guard, however, that paralysed resistance, by rendering it apparently hopeless ; and though applauded for their treachery at the time, public opinion soon showed that its baseness was generally felt. This civic force never after recovered its consideration. It was felt by all to be only the ornament of fêtes during prosperous, not the rampart against danger in adverse times.^{1*}

¹ Dumont,
438.

107.
Reflections
on the fall
of the mon-
archy.

It is not at the commencement of revolutionary disturbances that the danger to social happiness is to be apprehended, but after the burst of popular fury is over, and when the successful party begin to suffer from the passions to which they owed their elevation. The 10th August did not come till three years *after* the 14th July. The reason is evident. In the first tumult of passion, and in the exultation of successful resistance, the people are in good humour both with themselves and their leaders, and the new government is installed in its duties amidst the applause and hopes of their fellow-citizens. But, after this ebullition of triumphant feeling is over, come the sad and inevitable consequences of public convulsions—disappointed hopes, exaggerated expectations, industry without employment, capital without investment. The public suffering which immediately follows the triumph of the populace, is invariably and incomparably greater than that which stimulated their resistance. Capital, the most sensitive of created things, declines any investment ; credit is annihilated ; and the mass of the people, who

* “ La garde nationale rentrait humiliée et consternée dans ses boutiques et dans ses comptoirs. Elle avait justement perdu le pas sur le peuple.—Elle ne devait plus être que la force de parade de la Révolution, commandée pour assister à tous ses actes, à toutes ses fêtes, à tous ses crimes—décoration vivante et vaine aux ordres de tous les machinistes de la République.”—LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, iii. 214, 215.

are sustained only by the combined efforts of both, are speedily reduced to starvation. The ablest Republican writers confess "that one half of the misery which desolated France during the Revolution, would have overwhelmed the monarchy."¹ This suffering is inevitable ; it is the necessary consequence of shaken credit, invaded property, and uncontrolled licentiousness ; but coming, as it does, in the train of splendid hopes and excited imaginations, it occasions a discontent and acrimony in the lower orders, which can hardly fail of producing fresh convulsions. The people are never so ripe for a second revolution, as shortly after they have successfully achieved a first.

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VII.

1792.

¹Mig. i. 127.

It is the middle ranks who organise the first resistance to government, because it is their influence only which can withstand the shock of established power. They, accordingly, are at the head of the first revolutionary movement. But the passions which have been awakened, the hopes that have been excited, the disorder which has been produced in their struggle, lay the foundation of a new and more dangerous convulsion against the rule which they have established. Every species of authority appears odious to men who have tasted of the license and excitement of a revolution ; the new government speedily becomes as unpopular as the one which has been overthrown ; the ambition of the lower orders aims at establishing themselves in the situation in which a successful effort has placed the middle. A more terrible struggle awaits them than that which they have just concluded with arbitrary power ; a struggle with superior numbers, stronger passions, more unbridled ambition ; with those whom moneyed fear has deprived of employment, revolutionary innovation filled with hope, inexorable necessity impelled to exertion. In this contest, the chances are against the duration of the new institutions, unless the supporters can immediately command the aid of a numerous and disciplined body of men, proof alike against the

108.

The middle orders begin a revolution, but the mob finish it.

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VII.

intimidation of popular violence and the seduction of popular ambition.

1792.

109.
The Con-
stituent As-
sembly had
destroyed
the elements
of freedom
in France.

The event had already clearly proved, that the constitution of 1791 was inconsistent with monarchy ; for despite all the efforts of Louis to abide by its spirit, it was destroyed in less than a year after its institution. Subsequent events have not less clearly demonstrated that it was inconsistent with public freedom, and that the ruthless spoliation of the Constituent Assembly had destroyed the elements of freedom in France. Previous to the Revolution, the provinces maintained a long and honourable struggle with the crown for the national liberties ; and foremost in the contest were to be seen the most illustrious of the aristocracy of France. The parliaments, both of Paris and the provinces, derived their chief lustre from the consideration, character, and importance of their members ; and it was by their influence and example that the whole nation was stimulated to the resistance which ultimately led to the Revolution. But since the destruction of the aristocracy, nothing of the kind has occurred. France has invariably submitted without a struggle to the ruling power in the capital ; and whoever obtained the ascendancy in its councils, whether by the passions of the populace or the bayonets of the army, has ruled with despotic authority over the remainder of the kingdom. The bones and sinews of freedom were broken when the aristocracy was destroyed. Louis XV. and his ill-fated successor found it impossible to control the independent spirit of the provincial parliaments, but Napoleon had no more obsequious instruments of his will than in the Conservative Senate. The passions of the multitude, strong and often irresistible in moments of effervescence, cannot be relied on as permanent supporters of the cause of freedom ; it is a hereditary aristocracy, supported when necessary by their aid, which alone can be depended upon in such a contest, because it alone possesses lasting interests, which are liable

to be affected by the efforts of tyranny, and is influenced by motives not likely to disappear with the fleeting changes of popular opinion. Had the English Puritans confiscated the property of the aristocracy in 1642, a hundred and fifty years of liberty and glory would never have followed the Revolution of 1688. It was not Napoleon who destroyed the elements of freedom in France : he found them extinguished to his hand—he only needed to seize the reins, so strongly bitten on the nation by his revolutionary predecessors. There never was such a pioneer for tyranny as the National Assembly.

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VII.

1792.

The error of the Allied sovereigns at this period—and it was one fraught with the most disastrous consequences—consisted in attacking France at the period of its highest excitement, and thereby converting revolutionary frenzy into patriotic resistance, without following up their attack with such vigour as to crush the spirit which was thus awakened. France was beginning to be divided by the progress of the Revolution ; the cruel injustice of the Constituent Assembly to the priests had roused the terrible war in La Vendée,—when the dread of foreign invasion for a time reunited the most discordant interests. The catastrophe of the 10th August was in a great degree owing to the imprudent advance and ruinous retreat of the Allied army ; the friends of order at Paris were paralysed by the danger to the national independence, the supporters of the throne ashamed of a cause which seemed leagued with the public enemies. Mr Burke had prophesied that revolutionary France would be divided into a number of federal republics ; this perhaps would have happened, but for the foreign invasion which soon after took place. The unity of the republic, the triumphs of the consulate, the conquests of the empire, were accelerated by the ill-supported attacks of the Allies. France, indeed, like every other revolutionary power containing the elements of military strength, would ultimately have been driven into a system of foreign aggression, in order to find employment for the energy which the public

110.
Errors of
the Allies,
which led to
these events.

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VII.

1792.

convulsions had developed, and alleviation of the misery which they had created ; but it is extremely doubtful whether, from this source, ever could have arisen the same military power and union of feeling which sprang up after the defeated invasion of the Allies in 1792. In combating a revolution, one of two things should be done—it should either be left to waste itself by its own divisions, which, if practicable, is the wiser course, or attacked with such vigour and such a force as may speedily lead to its subjugation.

111.

Fatal effects
of the want
of religious
principle in
France.

If there is any one cause more than another to which the disastrous progress of the Revolution may justly be ascribed, it is the total want of religious feeling or control in many of the ablest, and almost all the most influential, of its supporters. It was the absence of this check on the base and selfish feelings of our nature, which precipitated the revolutionary party in the outset of its career into those cruel and unjust measures against the nobles and clergy, which excited the cupidity of all the middle orders in the state, by promising them the spoils of their superiors, and laid the foundations of a lasting and interminable feud between the higher and lower ranks, by founding the interests of the latter upon the destruction of the former. The dreams of philosophy, the dictates of enthusiasm, even the feelings of virtue, were found to be but a frail safeguard to public men in the calamitous scenes to which the progress of change speedily brought them. In this respect the English Revolution affords a memorable contrast to that of France ; and in its comparatively bloodless career, and the abstinence of the victorious party, save in Ireland, from any of those unjust measures of sweeping confiscation which have proved so destructive in the neighbouring kingdom, may be traced the salutary operation of that powerful restraint upon the base and selfish principles of our nature, which arises from the operation, even in its most extravagant form, of religious feeling. Mr Hume has said, that fanaticism was the disgrace of the Great

Rebellion, and that we shall look in vain among the popular leaders of England at that period for the generous sentiments which animated the patriots of antiquity. But without disputing the absurdity of many of their tenets, and the ridiculous nature of much in their manners, it may safely be affirmed that such fervour was the only effectual bridle which could be imposed on human depravity, when the ordinary restraints of law and order were at an end ; and that, but for that fanaticism, that revolution would have been disgraced by the proscriptions of Marius, or the executions of Robespierre.

The elevation of public characters is often not so much owing to their actual superiority to the rest of mankind, as to their falling in with the circumstances in which they are placed, and representing the spirit of the age in which they have arisen. The eloquence of Mirabeau would have failed in rousing the people on the 10th August ; the energy of Danton would have brought him to the block in the commencement of the Revolution ; the ambition of Napoleon would have been shattered against the democratic spirit of 1789. These great men successively rose to eminence because their temper of mind fell in with the current of public thought, while their talents enabled them to assume its direction. Mirabeau represented the Constituent Assembly : free in thought, bold in expression, undaunted in speculation, but tinged by the remains of monarchical attachment, and fearful of the excesses the hasty measures of that body were so well calculated to produce. Vergniaud was the model of the ruling party in the Legislative Assembly : republican in wishes, philosophic in principle, humane in intention, but precipitate and reckless in conduct, blinded by ambition, infatuated by speculation, ignorant of the world and the mode of governing it, alike destitute of the firmness to command, the wickedness to insure, or the vigour to seize success. Danton was the representative of the Jacobin faction : unbounded in ambition, unfettered by principle, undeterred by blood ;

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VII.

1792.

112.
Coincidence
of the suc-
cessive lead-
ers of the
Revolution
with the
characters
of its stages.

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1792.

rising in eminence with the public danger, because his talents were fitted to direct, and his energies were never cramped by the fear of exciting popular excesses. It is, in every age, men like him who have ultimately obtained the lead in public convulsions ; like the vultures, which invisible in ordinary times, are attracted by an unerring instinct to the scene of blood, and reap the last fruits of the discord and violence of others.

CHAPTER VIII.

FRENCH REPUBLIC—FROM THE DETHRONEMENT TO THE DEATH
OF LOUIS.—AUG. 10, 1792—JAN. 21, 1793.

“SUBJECTS,” says Tacitus, “cannot, without the greatest danger, subvert the ruling power ; for thence, in general, arises a *necessity* for crime: to avoid the consequences of a single rash act, men are obliged to plunge into the greatest excesses.” The career of guilt is the same in nations as in individuals ; when once commenced, it cannot, without the utmost resolution, possibly serious immediate risk, be abandoned. The ultimate acts of atrocity in which they both terminate, are, in general, the result of necessity ; of the pressure arising from excited passion, or the terror aroused by anticipated punishment. The power of repentance exists only in the commencement. If we would avoid the last deeds of blood, we must shun the first seductions of evil. France afforded a memorable example of these truths during the whole course of the Revolution. From the first commencement of the contest in Paris, each successive class that had gained the ascendancy had been more violent and more tyrannical than that which preceded it. The convocation of the States-general, and the oath in the Tennis-court, represented the struggle of the nation against the privileged classes ; the 14th July, and the capture of the Bastille, the insurrection of the middle class against the government ; the 10th August, the revolt of the populace against the middle class and the constitutional throne. The leaders of the

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VIII.

1792.

1.
Progressive
deteriora-
tion of the
ruling
powers in
France.

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VIII.

1792.

National Assembly were, in great part, actuated by pure motives, and their measures were chiefly blamable for the precipitance which sprang from inexperienced philanthropy : the measures of the Convention were tinged by the ferocity of popular ambition, and the increasing turbulence of excited talent ; the rule of the Jacobins was signalised by the energy of unshackled guilt, and stained by the cruelty of emancipated slaves.

2.
Cause of
this change.

It is a total mistake to suppose that the great body of mankind are capable of judging correctly on public affairs. No man, in any rank, ever found a tenth part of his acquaintance fitted for such a task. If the opinions of most men on the great questions which divide society are examined, they will be found to rest on the most flimsy foundations. Early prejudices, personal animosity, private interest, general delusion, constitute the secret springs from which the opinions flow which ultimately regulate their conduct. Truth, indeed, is in the end triumphant ; but it becomes predominant only upon the decay of interests, the experience of suffering, or the extinction of passion. The fabric of society is in ordinary times kept together, and moderation impressed upon the measures of government, by the contrary nature of these interests, and the opposing tendency of these desires. Reason is sometimes heard when the struggles of party, or the contentions of faction, have exhausted each other. The stability of free institutions arises from the counteracting nature of the forces which they constantly bring into action on each other, not the wisdom or patriotism with which either party is animated. Public opinion is often wrong in the beginning ; it is generally right in the end. And the reason is, that at first it is formed by the passions of the unthinking many, ignorant of mankind, but interested in passing events ; at last on the reason of the thinking few, whose judgment had been enlightened by experience, to whom alone the past is an object of concern, and by whom the verdict of posterity is formed.

These considerations furnish the eternal and unanswerable objection to democratic institutions. Wherever governments are directly exposed to their control, they are governed during periods of tranquillity by the cabals of interest, during moments of turbulence by the storms of passion. America, at present, exhibits an example of the former—France, during the Reign of Terror, afforded an instance of the latter. Those who refer to the original equality and common rights of mankind, would do well to show that men are equal in abilities as well as in birth ; that society could exist with the multitude really judging for themselves on public affairs ; that the most complicated subject of human study—that in which the greatest range of information is involved, and the coolest judgment required—can be adequately mastered by those, the majority of whom are disqualified by nature from the power of thought, disabled by labour from acquiring knowledge, and exposed by situation to the seductions of interest ; that the multitude, when exercising their supposed rights, are not following despotic leaders of their own creation ; and that a democracy is not, in the words of ancient wisdom, “ an aristocracy of orators, sometimes interrupted by the monarchy of a single orator.”

When the different classes, during the convulsions of a revolution, are brought into collision, the virtuous and prudent have no sort of chance with the violent and ambitious, unless the whole virtuous members of the community are early roused to a sense of their danger, and manfully unite in resisting the dangers with which they are threatened. In the later stages of such troubles, it is extremely difficult for them to recover their ascendancy : if they are not resolute and united, it is impossible. This is another consequence of the same principle. In the shock of a battle, gentleness and humanity are of little avail—audacity and courage are the decisive qualities. In the contests of faction, wisdom and moderation have as little influence. The virtuous are restrained by scruples,

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

3.

Fundamen-
tal error in
democratic
institutions.

4.

The wicked
in revolu-
tions inevi-
tably rise to
the head.

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VIII.

1792.

¹ Louvet, 26.
Rév. Mém.
vol. xxvi.5.
State of
Paris after
the 10th
August.

to which the unprincipled are strangers : difficulties which appear insurmountable to men accustomed to weigh the consequences of their actions, vanish before the recklessness of those who have nothing to lose. "It was early seen in the Revolution," says Louvet, "that the men with poniards would sooner or later carry the day against the men with principles ; and that the latter, upon the first reverse, must prepare for exile or death."¹

The storming of the Tuileries, and the imprisonment of the King, had destroyed the monarchy ; the Assembly had evinced its weakness by remaining a passive spectator of the contest ; the real power of government had fallen into the hands of the municipality of Paris. The municipality governed Paris ; Paris ruled the Assembly ; the Assembly guided France. As long as the contest lasted, the leaders of the Jacobins avoided the scene of danger. Marat disappeared during the confusion, and left the whole to Westermann ; Santerre was holding back with the forces of the faubourgs, till compelled by Westermann, with his sabre at his breast, to join the troops from Marseilles ; Robespierre remained concealed, and only appeared twenty-four hours after at the Commune, when he gave himself the whole credit of the affair. After the overthrow of the Swiss guards, the populace gave full reins to their vengeance in the sacking of the palace. Wearied of massacring or laying waste, they broke to pieces its magnificent furniture, and scattered its remains. Drunken savages broke into the most private apartments of the Queen, and there gave vent to indecent or obscene ribaldry. In an instant all the drawers and archives were forced open, and the papers they contained torn in pieces, or scattered to the winds. The mirrors and glasses were destroyed, the wardrobes and cabinets forced and rifled, the doors hewn down, the cellars ransacked, and the spirits and wines drunk in such enormous quantities that numbers died on the spot. To the horrors of pillage and murder soon succeeded those of conflagration.² Nor were the re-

² Deux
Amis, viii.
194, 196.
Duval, ii.
132. Th.
iii, 3, 5.
Barbaroux,
43, 69.

moter parts of the city exempt from danger. After the discharge of artillery, and the heavy volleys of the platoons had ceased, a dropping fire of musketry told how active was the pursuit of the fugitives ; while its receding sound, and reverberation from all quarters, indicated how many parts of the city had become the scene of horrors.

Early on the 11th, an immense crowd assembled on the spot which was yet reeking with the blood of the Swiss who had perished on the preceding day. A strange mixture of feelings actuated the spectators : they succoured the wounded, and at the same time honours were decreed to the troops engaged on the side of the Republic, and hymns of liberty were sung by the multitude. The emblems of royalty, the statues of the kings, were, by orders of the municipality, entirely destroyed ; those of bronze were carried to the foundery of cannon. Even the name of Henry IV. could not protect his image from destruction. The statues of Louis XIV. in the Place Vendôme, of Henry IV. on the Pont-Neuf, of Louis XIII. in the Place Royale, of Louis XV. in the Place which bears his name, were pulled down and destroyed. Guingerlot, second in command of the *gendarmerie à cheval* of Paris, having expressed his regret, in passing, at the destruction of so noble a monument of art, he was forthwith pierced to death with twenty pikes at the foot of the statue. Such was the eagerness of the multitude to pull down the magnificent colossal figure of Louis XIV. in the Place Vendôme, that it killed in its fall a well-known virago, employed by Marat to hawk his journal, who was active in the work of destruction. Similar devastations were committed in every quarter by frantic crowds of drunken men and women. The tombs of the kings of France at St Denis were rifled of their bronze ; those of Turenne, Richelieu, and Cardinal Mazarin, defaced. All the churches, and even many private houses, were stripped of their valuable metals.¹ The rise of democratic license in

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VIII.

1792.

6.
Fury of the
populace.
August 11.1 Deux
Amis, viii.
195, 196.
Duval, ii.
175, 177.
Lac, ix. 259.
Prudhom.
iv. 74, 75.

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VIII.

1792.

France was signalised by the destruction of the most venerable monuments of the monarchy : owing nothing to antiquity, the people repudiated the honours she had transmitted to her children.

7.
Reappoint-
ment of the
Girondist
ministry.

The first care of the Assembly was to provide, in some degree, for the administration of public affairs after the overthrow of the throne. For this purpose the Girondist ministers, Roland, Clavière, and Servan, were replaced in the offices of the interior, the war department, and the finances ; while Danton, who had been the chief director of the revolt, was appointed to the important office of minister of public justice. This audacious demagogue spoke at the head of a deputation from the municipality, in such language as sufficiently demonstrated where the real power of government now resided. “The people, who have sent us to your bar,” said he, “have charged us to declare to you, that they regard you as fully worthy of their confidence ; but that they recognise no other judges of the extraordinary measures to which necessity has driven them but the voice of the French people, your sovereign as well as ours, as expressed by the primary assemblies.” Incapable of resistance, the Assembly had no alternative but to pass decrees, sanctioning all that had been done, and inviting the petitioners to make their concurrence known to the people. Measures of the most important kind were at the same time adopted to secure in an effectual manner to the multitude the ascendancy they had now acquired. The whole *juges de paix* of Paris, who had displayed an honourable fidelity to the constitution in the late crisis, were by one decree of the constitution suppressed, and their places filled up by the most vehement democrats ; a camp was directed to be formed close to Paris composed of volunteers ; the national guards of the Filles de St Thomas and other loyal quarters were suppressed, and the civic force of Paris was organised in a new manner, in which the extreme democrats had an entire ascendancy. At the same time the formation of a series

Aug. 11.

of batteries on the heights of Montmartre, manned by the cannoneers of the suburbs, was decreed ; and the right of voting in the primary assemblies thrown open to every Frenchman without distinction, aged twenty-one, domiciled for a year in his commune, and living on the produce of his revenue or his labour. By another decree, the new municipality of Paris, in imitation of the Convention, suspended from their functions the whole committees of sections and the directory and council of the department of the Seine, so as to throw all the civil force of the metropolis under the direct control of new functionaries elected by the Jacobin party at a period of the most vehement excitement.¹

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¹ Deux
Amis, viii.
194, 195.
Hist. Parl.
xvii. 36, 37,
55. Th. iii.
6.

For fifteen hours that the sitting of the Assembly continued after the massacre of the Swiss, the King and royal family were shut up in the narrow seat which had first served them for an asylum. Exhausted by fatigue, and almost stifled by heat, the infant Dauphin at length fell into a profound sleep in his mother's arms ; the princess-royal and Madame Elizabeth, with their eyes streaming with tears, sat on each side of her. The King was tranquil during all the horrible confusion which prevailed, and listened attentively both to the speeches of the members of the legislature, and of the arrogant petitioners who continually succeeded each other at the bar. At length, at one o'clock on the following morning, they were transferred for the night to the building of the Feuillants. When left alone, Louis prostrated himself in prayer. "Thy trials, O God !" said he, "are dreadful ; give us courage to bear them. We adore the hand which chastens, as that which has so often blessed us ; have mercy on those who have died fighting in our defence !" On the following morning, they had the satisfaction of receiving the visits of many noble royalists, who, at their own imminent hazard, hastened to share the perils of the royal family. Among the rest was the faithful Hue, the King's valet, who had saved himself by leaping from a

8.
Disposal of
the King
and Royal
family.

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window of the Tuileries and plunging into the Seine during the hottest of the fire, where, when almost exhausted, he was picked up by a boatman. Already the august captives felt the pangs of indigence. All their dress and effects had been pillaged or destroyed ; the Dauphin was indebted for a change of linen to the care of the lady of the English ambassador, and the Queen was obliged to borrow twenty-five louis from Madame Anguie, one of the ladies of the bedchamber—a fatal gift, which was afterwards made the ground of that lady's trial and death, notwithstanding the claims of youth and beauty, and of the faithful discharge of duty.¹

¹ Lac. ix.
250, 256.
Huc, 36, 38.
Camp. ii.
263.

9.
They are
transferred
to the
Temple.
Aug. 13.

During the trying days which followed, the King displayed a firmness and serenity which could hardly have been anticipated from his previous character, and showed how little his indecision had proceeded from the apprehension of personal danger. For three days the royal family slept at the Feuillants. There Madame Campan, who had escaped almost by a miracle the massacre at the Tuileries, rejoined her august mistress, whom she found stretched on a wretched mattress, cast down from the pinnacle of earthly grandeur, and weeping, not for herself, but her family and faithful friends, whom she had involved in her ruin. Even in that extremity, however, she persisted in saying she would hold by her duty to her children to the last, and that she loved France though she knew it would witness her execution. On the 13th, the Assembly, at the command of the Commune, directed that they should be conveyed to the Temple. Notwithstanding the excitement of the populace, many tears were shed as the melancholy procession passed through the streets. The carriage, conveying eleven persons, was stopped on the Place Vendôme, in order that they might see the fragments of the statue of Louis XIV. ; and at length the doors of the Temple closed upon its victims, and Louis commenced the spotless and immortal days of his life.²

² Campan,
ii. 259, 261.
Huc, 42, 43.
Deux Amis,
viii. 217.
Lac. ix. 262.

The victory over the throne on the 10th August was

immediately followed by the submission of all the departments in France to the ruling party. Opinions had been more divided on the revolt of the 20th June ; so powerfully, during the intervening period, had the revolutionary spirit gained the ascendancy, and so much more generally does fear operate than the love of freedom. The Assembly, led by the Girondists, was all-powerful : unresisted, it wielded the whole moral force of France. But that celebrated party, so powerful in eloquence, now showed its weakness in action. Its leaders could neither regulate the storm they had raised, nor construct a new constitution in the room of that they had pulled down : they were strong only in the work of destruction. They had received a constitution to support, a throne to establish, a country to defend,—they left France without a constitution, without a king, without an army ; their authority disappeared in the insurrection which they themselves had raised. Their incapacity and weakness were soon apparent. At Rouen, a slight movement in favour of the constitutional monarchy took place, but being unsupported, it speedily ceased ; and the emissaries of the all-powerful municipality of Paris succeeded in terrifying the inhabitants into submission. Very different was the reception of the intelligence at the headquarters of Lafayette's army, which at that juncture was at Sedan. That general immediately issued a spirited proclamation, in which he announced his determination to march against the rebellious capital.* The officers, the soldiers, appeared to partake the indignation of their chief, who resolved to make an effort in favour of the constitutional throne.¹ The municipality of Sedan shared the sentiments of the troops ; and, by command of Lafayette, they arrested and

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10.

The armies
obey the ruling
powers.

¹ Deux
Amis, viii.
250, 262.
Bert. de
Moll. ix.
194, 196.
Lac. i. 277,
Mig. i. 197.
Lam, Hist.
des Gir. iii.
270.

* "Soldats ! citoyens !—La constitution que vous avez juré de maintenir n'est plus. Les Marseillais et une troupe de factieux ont assiégé le château des Tuileries : la garde nationale et les gardes Suisses ont fait une vigoureuse résistance ; mais, manquant de munitions, ils ont été obligés de se rendre. Les Suisses ont été massacrés. Le Roi, la Reine, et toute la famille royale, se sont sauvés à l'Assemblée Nationale : les factieux s'y sont portés, tenant d'une main

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threw into prison the three commissioners despatched by the National Assembly to appease the discontents of the army. The soldiers and the civil authorities renewed the oath of fidelity to the constitutional throne, and every thing announced a serious convulsion in the state.

11.
Fall and
flight of
Lafayette.
Aug. 17.

But the ruling power at Paris, in possession of the seat of government, and the venerable name of the Assembly, was too strong to be overthrown; and Lafayette was not the man to acquire the influence requisite to effect such a revolution. The soldiers were only recently enrolled; they had still the feelings of citizens: the period had not arrived when, accustomed to look only to their leader, they were prepared, at his command, to overthrow the authority of the legislature. The movement of Lafayette, and the troops under his immediate orders, was not generally seconded. A revolt in favour of the throne was looked upon with aversion, as likely to restore the ancient servitude of the nation; the tyranny of the mob, as yet unfelt, was much less the object of apprehension. Luckner, who commanded the army on the Moselle, attempted to second the measures of Lafayette; but Dumourier, and the inferior generals, stimulated by personal ambition, resolved to side with the ruling party. The former, of a feeble and irresolute character, made his public recantation before the municipality of Metz; and Lafayette himself, finding dangers multiplying on all sides, and uncertain what course to adopt in the perilous situation of the royal family, fled from the army, accompanied by Bureau de Pusy, Latour Maubourg, and Lameth, intending to proceed to the United States, where his first efforts in favour of freedom had been made. But he was arrested near the frontier

le fer, de l'autre la flamme, et l'ont forcée de décréter la suspension du Roi—ce qu'elle a fait pour lui sauver la vie.—Citoyens! vous n'avez plus de représentans: l'Assemblée Nationale est esclave: vos armées sont sans chef; Pétion règne; le farouche Danton et ses satellites sont les maîtres. Ainsi, soldats—choisissez! Voulez-vous rétablir sur le trône l'héritier, de la couronne, ou voulez-vous Pétion pour roi? LAFAYETTE."—BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, ix, 196.

by the Austrians, and conducted to the dungeons of Olmutz. He was offered his liberty on condition of making certain recantations : but he preferred remaining four years in a rigorous confinement to receding in any particular from the principles which he had embraced. The Assembly declared him a traitor, and set a price on his head. The first leader of the Revolution owed his life to imprisonment in an Austrian fortress.¹

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¹ Bert. de
Moll. ix. 197,
200. Deux
Amis, viii.
272, 274.
Lac. i. 278,
279. Th.
iii. 30, 34.

Meanwhile Danton and Robespierre, the mouthpieces of the all-powerful municipality of Paris, incessantly urged the National Assembly to adopt sanguinary measures against the opponents of the Revolution. "Blood," said the latter, "has not yet flowed ; the people remain without vengeance. No sacrifice has hitherto been offered to the manes of those who died on the 10th August. And what have been the results of that immortal day ? A tyrant has been suspended ; why is he not dethroned and punished ? why is not a trophy erected to the memory of the heroes of that immortal day ? Are they not equal to the most glorious recorded in the annals of Greece and Rome ? Let the fragments of the statue of the tyrant Louis XIV. be moulded into a monument of the heroes who have subverted the despotism he established. You speak of bringing to judgment the conspirators of the 10th August ; that is too slow a way of wreaking the national vengeance ; the punishment of some is nothing, when others escape ; they should all be punished, and by judges created specially for the occasion."—"The tranquillity of the people," said he at another time, "depends on the punishment of the guilty ; and what have you done to effect it ? Your decree establishing a new tribunal is manifestly insufficient. It is neither sufficiently extensive nor explicit, for it speaks only of the crimes of the 10th August ; and the crimes against the Revolution are of much older date. Under that expression the traitor Lafayette would escape the punishment due to his guilt. The people, moreover,

12.

Furious de-
mands for
blood by the
municipa-
lity of Paris.
Aug. 17.

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1792.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xvii. 76, 80.
Moniteur,
Aug. 16.
Th. iii. 26.
Lac. i. 261.

will not endure that this new tribunal should preserve the forms hitherto observed. The appeal from one jurisdiction to another occasions an intolerable delay ; it is absolutely necessary that the tribunal should be composed of deputies chosen from the sections, and that it should have the power of decreeing, without appeal, the last punishment of the law.”¹

13.
Institution
of the Revo-
lutionary
Tribunal.
Aug. 17.

The Assembly in vain strove to resist these sanguinary demands. As they continued to temporise, the Commune sent them the most menacing messages, threatening to sound the tocsin at night if the public vengeance was any longer delayed. “I demand,” said the orator of the municipality, “that before separating you appoint a citizen for each section of Paris, to form a criminal tribunal. I demand that it shall hold its sittings at the Chateau of the Tuileries. I demand that Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, who thirst so for blood, be satiated by seeing it flow from their infamous satellites. The people are tired of the delay of vengeance : beware of their taking the sword into their own hands. If within two hours the jury is not ready to convict, the most terrible calamities await Paris.” Intimidated by these menaces, the Assembly appointed a tribunal for the trial of these offenders, the first model of the court afterwards so well known under the name of the Revolutionary Tribunal. Its composition was such as at once threw the entire direction of the proceedings into the hands of the extreme Jacobin faction. It was decreed that the court should consist of two chambers, each of four judges, with a public accuser and other officers : the decisions to be by the verdict of a jury. The court was to punish by death, and without appeal : and the judges, jury, public accusers, and all the officers, were to be appointed by the universal suffrage of the whole electors of the forty-eight sections of Paris.²

² Decree,
Aug. 17.
Mig. i. 201.
Lac. Pr.
Hist. i. 277.
Th. iii. 27.
Hist. Parl.
xvii. 91, 94.
96.

Such was the vehemence of revolutionary passion, and the energy of revolutionary action at this period, that

this terrible tribunal was appointed, constituted, and in complete activity in a few days. The forty sections of Paris met, and chose the judges, accusers, and juries, in terms of the decree of the 17th August. Robespierre was offered the situation of president: he refused it, and it was bestowed on Pepin Desgrouettes, an attorney of the most abandoned character, and a worthy head of such a tribunal. Osselin, d'Aubigny, Dubail, Coffinhal, Lullier, and Cailler de l'Estaing, were the judges or public accusers with him—all of them men as notorious for the former profligacy or cupidity of their lives, as they and their successors became afterwards for the insatiable thirst for blood by which their dreadful career was distinguished. The mode by which this court succeeded in convicting and executing so many persons, was by sustaining vague charges of a conspiracy against the state, or the sovereign power of the people, and admitting, as evidence of accession to such a conspiracy, the slightest words or deeds indicating a wish to revert to constitutional government, or withstand the self-constituted despotism of the multitude.¹

The revolutionary tribunal was organised on the 19th August, and instantly entered on the discharge of its functions. The public accusers sent a municipal officer at the head of a battalion of the national guard, and another of Marseillais, who, under pretext of searching for the Swiss and the rebels against the sovereign power of the people on the 10th August, made domiciliary visits over all Paris, Versailles, and for six leagues round, searching every house, every office, every wood. Great numbers of persons were arrested, and the first person brought to trial was D'Anglermont, accused of being an agent of the court, who died with heroic courage on the Place du Carrousel on the 21st August.* The next was

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14.

Formation
and first proceedings of
the Revolutionary Tribunal.¹ Deux
Amis, viii.
276, 278.
Bert. de
Moll. ix.
215, 216.15.
Its first
victims, and
adoption of
the guillotine.

* He was the first victim of the Revolution who suffered by the guillotine. It was from that time made use of for all the executions in France.—*Histoire de la Guillotine*, i. 94.

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¹ Deux
Amis, viii.
178, 180.
Bert. de
Moll. ix.
221, 222.

16.
Death of
Bachman
and Du-
rosol.

Aug. 25.

² Weber, ii.
250, 251,
and 571.
572. Deux
Amis, viii.
279, 280.
Bert. de
Moll. ix.
202, 204.

the venerable Laporte, intendant of the civil list, charged with having placarded and distributed anti-popular handbills. He was quickly condemned, and turning to the people, he said—"I die innocent. Citizens, may my death restore peace to the empire, and terminate your intestine divisions. May the sentence which deprives me of life be the last unjust sentence this tribunal is ever to pronounce!" He then turned aside, and a few tears fell from his eyes; but instantly regaining his composure, he ascended the scaffold with a firm step, and died, says the Republican historian, "with the serenity of one who had never loved life but to communicate happiness to all around him."¹

The next victim was M. Le Baron Bachman, commandant of the Swiss Guard, which had combated in the Carrousel, and he was, of course, condemned amidst shouts of savage exultation from the multitude who thronged the court. His noble figure, martial air, and undaunted manner, commanded, however, respect even in that den of assassins—"My death will be avenged," were his last words. He died with a heroism worthy of his station as leader of that noble band. History must assign him a place by the side of Leonidas. Durosol, editor of the *Gazette de Paris*, a Royalist journal, was the next victim. He heard with firmness his sentence, which ordered him to be executed on the 25th August, and left the court exclaiming—"I glory in dying on the day of St Louis, for my religion and my king." To render the punishment more impressive, he was led by torchlight, at nine at night, to the place of execution in the Place of the Carrousel. On reaching the foot of the scaffold, a letter was put into his hands from a young woman to whom he was attached, which said,—“My friend, you are condemned! Prepare for death. My soul is torn: but you know what I have promised you.” On reading these words, tears fell from his eyes. “Alas!” said he, “she will suffer under it more than I.”² She did not

long survive him : within twenty-four hours she died of grief.

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Although, however, the revolutionary tribunal thus daily presented to the people the spectacle of executions of the Royalists, varied in form and manner, to render them more impressive or attractive, yet its proceedings were far from satisfying the dreadful thirst for blood, and they were generally complained of as undecided and desultory. A more wholesale and expeditious method of disposing of the Royalists was conceived by Danton and the municipality of Paris, and, from the extremely excited state of the public mind, met with too ready a reception. The advance of the Prussians had occasioned the greatest agitation in the capital, and eminently favoured the savage designs of the demagogues. On the 20th August, Longwy was invested ; on the 21st it capitulated ; on the 30th the enemy appeared before Verdun, and the bombardment immediately commenced. Terror, the greatest instigator to cruelty, seized the minds of the populace of Paris ; the executive council, composed of the ministers of state, met with the committee of general defence, to deliberate on the measures which should be pursued. Some proposed to await the enemy under the walls of Paris ; others to retire to Saumur. "Are you not aware," said Danton, when his turn to speak came, "that France is governed by Paris, and that if you abandon the capital, you abandon yourselves and your country to the stranger ? We must at all hazards maintain our position in this city. The project of fighting under its walls is equally inadmissible ; the 10th August has divided the country into two parties, and the ruling force is too inconsiderable to give us any chance of success. My advice is, that to disconcert their measures, and arrest the enemy, we must *strike terror* into the Royalists." These words were accompanied by a horizontal movement of his hand across his throat, which too well explained his meaning. The committee, who well understood the meaning of these

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17.

Consternation produced by the advance of the Prussians, and plan for a massacre in the prisons.

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ominous words, expressed their consternation—"Yes," said he, "I repeat it; we must strike terror." Subsequently he justified what he had done when charged by the Girondists with it in the Convention,—“I looked,” said he, “my crime in the face, and committed it.” The Committee of Twelve declined to adopt the project; but Danton immediately laid it before the municipality, by whom it was readily embraced. He wished to impress the enemy with a sense of the energy of the Republicans, and to engage the multitude in such sanguinary measures, as, by rendering retreat impossible, gave them no chance of safety but in victory. The Assembly, panic-struck, was incapable of arresting the measures which were in progress. The Girondists, who had so often ruled its decisions when the object was to assail the court, found themselves weak and unsupported when the end was to restrain the people. Their benches were deserted; the energy of victory, the prestige consequent on success, had passed over to the other side. Incessantly speaking of restraining the municipality, they never attempted anything; their leaders were already threatened with proscription; Roland, the minister of the interior, Vergniaud, Gaudet, and Brissot, were in hourly expectation of an accusation.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, viii.
284, 286.
Bert. de
Moll. ix. 237.
249. Lac.
Pr. Hist. i.
285. Mig.
i. 202. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. iii. 321.

18.
The barriers
closed, and
the Assembly
dissolves the
municipality.
Aug. 29.

Preparations on a great scale, and of the most frightful kind, were immediately made for the approaching massacre. Never had wholesale murder been so deliberately prepared, so systematically arranged. Maillard, one of the leaders of the revolt on the 6th October, was first sent for, and desired to get ready his band of assassins. At daybreak on the 28th August two commissioners of the municipality wakened the grave-digger of the parish of St James, and ordered him to follow them. By his assistance, and the aid of a map they brought with them, they discovered the entrance of the catacombs—vast subterraneous quarries, originally excavated for stone used in the buildings of Paris, and since employed as a place

of deposit for the bones in the surcharged cemeteries of the capital. They marked out on the ground the limits of an aperture six feet in diameter, to be opened into these gloomy abodes, and enjoined the grave-digger to have it ready in *four days*. Having said this, and enjoined profound secrecy, they retired.* On the 29th August the barriers were closed by order of the municipality, and remained shut for forty-eight hours, so as to render all escape impossible; and on the 31st, and 1st of September, domiciliary visits were made by order of the Commune, with a vast and appalling force, in every street and suburb of Paris. Great numbers of all ranks were imprisoned, but the victims were chiefly selected from the noblesse and the dissident clergy. To conceal the real designs of the municipality, the citizens capable of bearing arms were at the same time assembled in the Champ de Mars, formed into regiments, and marched off for the frontier. The tocsin sounded, the *générale* beat, cannon were discharged. All Paris was in the most dreadful agitation at these ominous preparations, which presaged but too surely an approaching massacre; and the Assembly, recovering some degree of energy from the near advent of danger, mustered up courage enough on the day following to pass a decree suspending the new municipality, which had thus usurped the entire government of the state, and directing each of the forty-eight sections of Paris to meet and appoint new representatives. At the same time the municipality were ordered to appear at the bar of the Assembly to answer for various thefts of valuable articles in the Tuileries, particularly in the jewel office, which had been brought home to some of its members.¹

¹ Hist. Parl. xvii. 160, 165. Deux Amis, viii. 234, 236. Bert. de. Moll. ix. 239, 246. Moniteur, Sept. 1.

This important decree, which, if enforced with vigour, and supported by an adequate amount of physical strength, might have changed the whole history of the Revolution, was rendered totally useless, and worse than useless, by the weakness of the legislature and the daring of the

19.
Speech of Vergniaud to the deputation of the municipality, Aug. 31.

* LAMARTINE. *Hist. des Girond.*, iii. 321, 322.

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municipality. Strong in the consciousness of the physical predominance of the multitude by which they were surrounded, the magistrates, without a moment's hesitation, bade defiance to the legislature. They appeared at their bar ; but they appeared as conquerors, surrounded by an armed mob, which effectually overawed the Assembly. The President Vergniaud thus addressed them :—"All the authorities of the kingdom owe their origin to the law. The formation of the provisional municipality of Paris is contrary to the existing laws ; it is the result, perhaps necessary, of an extraordinary crisis, and should cease with it. Would you, gentlemen, dishonour our beautiful Revolution by exhibiting to the whole empire the scandal of a municipality in rebellion against the law ? Paris is a great metropolis, which by its population and numerous establishments unites the greatest advantages ; and what would France say if this noble city, investing its magistrates with a dictatorial power, should seek to withdraw itself from the constitution common to all, to isolate itself from the rest of the empire, and give the first example of a violation of the laws and resistance to the National Assembly ? But Paris will not give such an example. The National Assembly has done its duty ; you will discharge yours."¹

¹ Hist. Parl. xvii. 167, 168. Deux Amis, viii. 239, 291. Moniteur, Sept. 1.

20.
Answer of Tallien and the municipality.

Loud applauses followed these intrepid words ; but Tallien, the orator of the municipality, answered,—“Legislators, the provisional representatives of the commune of Paris have been calumniated ; they have been judged without being heard ; they come to demand justice. Called by the people on the night of the 9th and the morning of the 10th August to save the country, they were bound to do what they have done. The people have not limited their powers ; they said, ‘Go, act in our name, and we will ratify all you shall do.’ The Legislative Assembly has always commanded the respect of the citizens of Paris. Its hall has never been soiled except by the presence of the worthy descen-

dant of Louis XI., and of the rival of the Medici. If the tyrants still live, is it not to be ascribed to the respect of the people for the National Assembly? All that we have done the people have sanctioned. (Loud applause from the galleries.) We were charged with the safety of the country; we have saved it. We have made, it is said, domiciliary visits. Who ordered us to do so? Yourselves. We have arrested the refractory priests: they are securely confined. *In a few days the soil of freedom shall be delivered from their presence.* If you strike us, you immolate at the same time the people who gained the victory of 14th July, who consolidated their power on 10th August, and will maintain what they have gained." Meanwhile a tumultuous mob surrounded the Assembly; soon three hundred men came in and crowded every avenue. One of them addressing the Assembly said:—"People in the galleries, National Assembly, and you, M. President, we come in the name of the people who wait at the gate, to demand to defile through the hall to see the representatives of the municipality who are here. We will die, if necessary, with them." Dead silence pervaded the Assembly: terror had frozen every heart. At the conclusion of every sentence, shouts of "Vive la Commune! Vivent nos bons Commissaires!" resounded through the hall, and the mob defiled in a menacing manner before the tribune. Subdued by so many dangers, the Assembly broke up without coming to any resolution, and the victory of the magistracy was complete.¹

Encouraged by this success, the municipality proceeded without farther hesitation in their sanguinary measures. Danton directed their operations, and framed the list of proscription at the hotel of the minister of justice. He soon after appeared at the bar of the Assembly, to give an account of the measures taken to insure the public safety. "A part of the people," he said, "have already set out for the frontiers; another is engaged in digging our intrenchments; and the third, with pikes, will defend

¹ Hist. Parl.
xvii. 166,
167. Th.
iii. 54. Mig.
i. 294. Lac.
Pr. Hist. i.
284, 288.
Deux Amis,
viii. 287,
291.

21.
Energetic
plans of
Danton.
Sept. 1.

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VIII.

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the interior of the city. But this is not enough ; you must send commissaries and couriers to rouse all France to imitate the example of the capital ; we must pass a decree, by which every citizen shall be obliged, under pain of death, to serve in person against the common enemy." At this instant the tocsin began to sound, the cannon were discharged, and he immediately added—"The cannon which you hear is not the cannon of alarm : it is the signal to advance against your enemies ; to conquer them, to crush them ! What is required ? Boldness ! boldness ! boldness ! and France is saved !" These words, pronounced with a voice of thunder, produced the most appalling impression ; and a decree of the Assembly was immediately proclaimed, announcing the urgent danger of the commonwealth, commanding the whole citizens to repair armed to their several posts as soon as the cannon of alarm was heard, and appointing a committee of twelve, with absolute power to concur with the executive, of which Danton was the head, in the measures necessary for the public safety.¹

¹ *Moniteur*, Sept. 4, p. 1041. *Bert. de Moll.* ix. 269, 270. *Mig.* i. 204. *Lac.* i. 288, 289. *Th.* ii. 61. *Hist. Parl.* xvii. 347.

22.
General terror in Paris.

The utmost terror was excited in every part of Paris by these preparations. An uncertain feeling of horror prevailed ; every one apprehended that some dismal catastrophe was approaching, though none knew where or on whom the stroke was to fall. All the public authorities, the Assembly, the Municipality, the Sections, the Jacobins, had declared their sittings permanent. The whole city was in consternation, but the place where the alarm was the greatest was in the prisons. The numerous inmates of these gloomy abodes were all called over by name on the evening of the 1st September, under pretence of sending them off to the frontier ; but the faltering voice of the jailers revealed the preparation of some terrible design. All who had friends secreted began to tremble : domiciliary visits soon became universal, and ere long nearly five thousand persons crowded the prisons of Paris.² In the Temple, the royal family, who had so much reason to apprehend

² *Weber*, ii. 254, 255. *Th.* iii. 61, 62. *Deux Amis*, viii. 293, 296. *Bert. de Moll.* ix. 266, 271.

danger from the public convulsion, eagerly asked what had given rise to the unusual noise in the streets ; while, at all the other prisons, the anxious looks of the jailers, and the unusual precaution of removing all the knives in use at dinner, told but too plainly that some bloody project was in contemplation.

At two in the morning, on the 2d September, the signal was given ; the *générale* beat, the tocsin sounded, and the citizens of all classes joined their respective banners. The victors and the vanquished, on the 10th August, appeared in the same ranks—so completely had the crisis of national danger, and the agitation of the moment, drowned even the fiercest civil discord. A powerful auxiliary force was thus provided for the armies, which was instantly despatched towards the frontiers ; while the relentless municipality was rapidly organising the work of destruction in the capital, now stripped of its most energetic citizens. A band of three hundred assassins, directed and paid by the magistrates, assembled round the doors of the Hôtel de Ville. Ardent spirits, liberally furnished by the municipality, augmented their natural ferocity. Money was supplied to those who appeared behind their comrades in determination, and the savage band marched through the streets singing revolutionary songs. Robespierre, Billaud Varennes, and Collot d'Herbois, alternately harangued the multitude—"Magnanimous people," exclaimed the last, "you march to glory ! How unfortunate are we to be unable to follow your steps : how the audacity of our enemies will increase when they no longer behold the conquerors of the 10th August ! Let us at least not become responsible for the murder of your wives and children, which the conspirators are preparing even in the prisons, where they are expecting their deliverers." Roused by these words, the mob became ready for every atrocity, and answered the discourse with repeated cries for the death of the imprisoned victims.¹

The prison of the Abbaye was the first to be assailed.

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

23.

Massacre in
the prisons.

¹ Deux
Amis, viii.
296, 298.
Bert. de
Moll. ix.
271, 272,
299. Lac. i.
290. Th. ii.
75. Mig. i.
204.

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VIII.

1792.

24.
In the
Abbaye.

The unhappy inmates of this building had for some days been alarmed by the obscure hints of their jailers. At length, at three o'clock on the morning of the 2d September, the increased clamour, and the shouts of the multitude, announced that their last hour had arrived. Four-and-twenty priests, placed under arrest for refusing to take the new oaths, were in custody at the Hôtel de Ville. They were removed in six coaches to the prison of the Abbaye, amidst the yells and execrations of the mob; and no sooner had they arrived there, than they were surrounded by a furious multitude, headed by Maillard, armed with spears and sabres, dragged out of their vehicles into the inner court of the prison, and there pierced by a hundred weapons. The massacre of these priests was but the prelude to a general massacre in the Abbaye, the horrors of which exceeded anything hitherto witnessed in the Revolution. Wearied at length with the labour of hewing down so many victims, they fell upon the plan of instituting a mock tribunal, with the murderer Maillard for its president, in which, after going through the form of a trial, they turned them out to be massacred by the people who thronged the prison doors, loudly clamouring for their share in the work of extermination.¹

¹ Bert. de
Moll. ix. 271,
272. Deux
Amis, viii.
297, 298.
Saint
Meard, 22.

25.
Hideous
cruelty of
the people.

The cries of these victims, who were led out to be hewn to pieces by the multitude, first drew the attention of the prisoners in the cells to the fate which awaited themselves: seized separately and dragged before an inexorable tribunal, they were speedily given over to the vengeance of the populace. Reding was one of the first to be selected. The pain of his broken limbs extorted cries even from that intrepid Swiss soldier, as he was dragged along from his cell to the hall of trial: and one of the assassins, more merciful than the rest, drew his sword across his throat, so that he perished before reaching the judges. His dead body was thrown out to the assassins. The forms of justice were prostituted to the most

inhuman massacre. Torn from their dungeons, the prisoners were hurried before a tribunal, where the president Maillard sat by torchlight with a drawn sabre before him, and his robes drenched with blood ; officials with drawn swords, and shirts stained with gore, surrounded the chair. A few minutes, often a few seconds, disposed of the fate of each individual. Dragged from the pretended judgment-hall, they were turned out to the populace, who thronged round the doors armed with sabres, panting for slaughter, and with loud cries demanding a quicker supply of victims. No executioners were required ; the people despatched the condemned with their own hands, and sometimes enjoyed the savage pleasure of beholding them run a considerable distance before they expired. Immured in the upper chambers of the building, the other prisoners endured the agony of witnessing the prolonged sufferings of their comrades ; a dreadful thirst added to their tortures, and the inhuman jailers refused even a draught of water to their earnest entreaties. Some had the presence of mind to observe in what attitude death soonest relieved its victims, and resolved, when their hour arrived, to keep their hands down, lest, by warding off the strokes, they should prolong their agonies.¹

The populace, however, in the court of the Abbaye, complained that the foremost only got a stroke at the prisoners, and that they were deprived of the pleasure of murdering the aristocrats. It was in consequence agreed, that those in advance should only strike with the backs of their sabres, and that the wretched victims should be made to run the gauntlet through a long avenue of murderers, each of whom should have the satisfaction of striking them before they expired. The women in the adjoining quarter of the city made a formal demand to the Commune for lights to see the massacres, and a lamp was in consequence placed near the spot where the victims issued, amidst the shouts of the spectators. Benches, under the charge of sentinels, were next

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

¹ Deux
Amis, viii.
299, 300.
Saint
Meard, 22.
30, 40. Th.
iii. 64, 65,
66. Peltier's
Mémoires,
xi. 26. Bert.
de Moll. ix.
273, 274.

26.
Atrocious
conduct of
the populace
in the court.

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

¹ Abbé Si-
card, 112,
116, 134.
Rév. Mém.
xlv. Deux
Amis, viii.
304, 305.

arranged "*Pour les Messieurs*," and another "*Pour les Dames*," to witness the spectacle. As each successive prisoner was turned out of the gate, yells of joy rose from the multitude, and when he fell they danced like cannibals round his remains. When the victims were despatched, the murderers cut off their heads, and went with them, to claim the promised reward, to Pétion ; and the mayor of Paris, the basest of men, actually poured out wine into glasses, which they received into their bloody hands.¹

27.
Speech of
Billaud
Varennes
to the mur-
derers.

Billaud Varennes soon after arrived, wearing his magisterial scarf. Mounted on a pile of dead, he harangued the people amidst this infernal scene,—“Citizens, you have exterminated some wretches ; you have saved your country ; the municipality is at a loss how to discharge its debt of gratitude towards you. I am authorised to offer each of you twenty-four francs, which shall be instantly paid. (Loud applause.) Respectable citizens, continue your good work, and acquire new titles to the homage of your country ! But let no unworthy action soil your hands. You dishonour this glorious day if you engage in any meaner work. Abstain from pillage ; the municipality shall take care that your claims on them are discharged. Be noble, grand, and generous, worthy of the task you have undertaken. Let everything on this great day be fitting the sovereignty of the people, who have committed their vengeance to your hands. Whoever labours in a prison shall receive a louis from the funds of the Commune.”* The assassins were not slow in claiming their promised reward. Stained with blood and bespattered with brains, with their swords and bayonets in their hands, they soon thronged the doors of the committee of the municipality, who were at a loss for funds to discharge their claims. “Do you think I have only earned twenty-four francs ?” said a young baker

* “Quiconque aura travaillé dans une prison recevra un bon d’un louis, payable sur la caisse de la Commune.” *Deux Amis*, viii. 305.

armed with a massy weapon ; “ *I have slain forty with my own hands.*” Great as this number was, it was surpassed by a Negro named de l’Orme, who slew above *two hundred* persons during the massacres. At midnight the mob returned, threatening instant death to the whole committee if they were not forthwith paid ; with the sabre at his throat, a member of the municipality advanced the half of the sum required, and the remainder was paid by Roland, the minister of the interior. The names of the assassins, and the sums they received, are still to be seen in the registers of the section of the Jardin des Plantes, of the Municipality, and of the Section of Unity ; and the bills of the municipality to the assassins, signed “ Tallien et Mechée,” yet exist to bear deadly evidence against the magistracy elected by the universal suffrage of Paris.^{1*}

The dignity of virtue, the charms of beauty, were alike lost upon the multitude. Among the rest, they seized on the humane and enlightened M. Sicard, teacher of the deaf and dumb, the tried friend of the poorer classes. He would have been instantly murdered, though his character was known, had not a courageous watchmaker, of the name of Monnot, rushed between, and stayed the pike, already raised to be plunged in his bosom. In the midst of the massacres, Mademoiselle de Sombreuil, eighteen years of age, threw herself on her father’s neck, who was beset by the assassins, and declared they should not strike him but through her body. In amazement at her courage, the mob paused, and one of the number presented her with a cup filled with blood, exclaiming, “ Drink ; it is the blood of the aristocrats ! promising, if she drank it off, to spare his life. She did so, and he

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¹ Deux Amis, viii. 320, 321. Prudhom. iv. 105, 106. Rév. Mém. lxvi. 338, 339. Abbé Sicard, 134, 135. Th. iii. 74, 75. Lam. Hist. des Gir. iii. 383.

28.

Heroism of Monnot, and Mademoiselles de Sombreuil and Cazotte.

* Besides these sums, there is inscribed on the book of the municipality the advance of 1463 francs, on September 4, to the assassins.—THIERS, iii. 75. “ N’a-t-on pas conservé dans un dépôt public ces mêmes bons pour les assassins, signés ‘ Tallien et Mechée ? ’ Oh ! s’il ne s’agissait que de faire le procès aux auteurs de ces journées de Septembre, la tâche serait facile.”—*Deux Amis*, viii. 305.

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was saved. Mademoiselle Cazotte, still younger, sought out her aged parent in prison during the tumult. When the guards came to drag him before the tribunal, she clung so firmly to his neck, that it was found impossible to separate them, and she succeeded in softening the murderers ; but he perished a few days afterwards with the courage of a martyr, and his heroic daughter only learned his fate upon being subsequently liberated from confinement. Marat, who was not steeled against individual pity, shed tears on hearing of this act of devotion : “ But as to those Swiss,” he added, “ you would do wrong to save one ; let them be sacrificed to the last man.” A young woman, the day before the massacres commenced, in dread for the life of her aged parent, which she knew was menaced, wrote to Marat offering to surrender her person to him, if he would save that loved relative. He met her by appointment, but had the generosity to dismiss her untouched, with the promise of her father's life. “ I wished,” he said, “ to see how far filial piety would go.”¹

¹ Deux Amis, viii. 320, 321. Rév. Mémoires, xvi. 76, 77. Sicard, 105. Th. iii. 71. Lam. Hist. des Gir. iv. 174.

^{29.} Massacre in the prison of the Carmes.

Similar tragedies took place at the same time in all the other jails of Paris, and in the religious houses, which were filled with victims. In the prison of the Carmes above two hundred of the clergy were assembled : in the midst of them was the Archbishop of Arles, venerable for his years and his virtues, and several other prelates. Some, when the assassins approached, endeavoured to escape by flying into the garden and climbing up the trees : they were all shot or pierced with pikes in a few minutes. Thirty, with the Archbishop of Arles and the Bishops of Beauvais and Saintes, in the spirit of the martyrs of old, repaired with steady steps to a little chapel at the end of the garden. Arranged round the altar, they heard the cries of the assassins, who clamoured at the gates ; a few, yielding to the dictates of terror, had escaped, and were beyond the reach of danger, when, struck with shame at deserting their brethren in such an extremity, they returned, and shared their fate. Awed

by the sublimity of the scene, the wretches hastened the work of destruction, lest the hearts of the spectators should be softened ere the massacre began : the Archbishop of Arles repeated, while the murders were going on, the prayer for those in the agonies of death, and they expired, imploring forgiveness for their murderers.¹

The cries now became loud for the Archbishop of Arles. "I am he," said the archbishop mildly. "Wretch!" exclaimed they, "you have shed the blood of the patriots of Arles."—"I never injured a human being," replied the prelate. "Then," exclaimed a ruffian, "I will despatch you;" and with that he struck him on the head with his sabre. The archbishop remained motionless, without even raising his hands to his head to avert a second blow. Upon this the assassin struck him across the face with his sabre, and the blood flowed in torrents over his dress; but still he neither moved nor fell: a third stroke laid him senseless on the pavement. Another murderer then leapt on his body and plunged his sabre into his breast: it went in so far, that he could not draw it out, and he broke it and paraded the stump, with the watch of the archbishop, which he seized from the dead body, through the streets. Many were offered life on condition of taking the Revolutionary oaths; all refused, and died in the faith of their fathers. Among the slain were several curates, who had been eminent for their charity in the dreadful famine of 1789; they received death from the hands of those whom they had saved from its horrors. So numerous were the murders in this prison, that the cells were floating in blood, and it ran in frightful streams down the stairs into the courts of the building.²

The fate of the Princess Lamballe was particularly deplorable. Tenderly attached to the Queen, she at first, at her own desire, shared her captivity, but was afterwards, by orders of the municipality, separately confined in the Petite Force. When the assassins arrived at her

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

¹ Bert. de
Moll. ix. 276,
277. Lac. i.
290. Th. iii.
64, 66.

30.

Death of the Arch-
bishop of
Arles.

² Bert. de
Moll. ix. 277,
278. Lac.
Pr. Hist. i.
290, 291.
Th. iii. 64,
65, 74, 75.

31.

Death of the
Princess
Lamballe.

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

cell, she was offered her life if she would swear hatred to the King and Queen: she refused, and was instantly dragged out over a pile of dead bodies, stepping up to the ankles in blood, and then desired to cry—"Vive la Nation!" Speechless with horror, she could not articulate, and was instantly struck down. One of her domestics, whom she had loaded with benefits, gave the first blow. Her graceful figure was quickly stripped of all its clothing, and exposed in that state for two hours to the gaze of the populace. She was then beheaded, and the body torn in pieces, the fragments put on the end of pikes, and paraded through different parts of the city. The head, which, according to the custom of the time, was carefully powdered, was raised on a lance, and first carried to the palace of the Duke of Orleans, who rose from dinner and looked for some minutes in silence at the ghastly spectacle. Madame Buffon, his last favourite, and some other companions of his pleasures, were at table with him at the time. "My God," exclaimed she, "it is thus they will carry my own head through the streets." The head was next conveyed to the Temple, and paraded before the windows of Louis XVI. Ignorant of what had passed, and attracted by the noise, the King, at the desire of one of the commissioners of the municipality, proceeded to the window, and, by the beautiful hair, recognised the bloody remains of his once lovely friend; another commissioner, more humane, tried to prevent him from beholding it. Afterwards, the King was asked if he remembered the name of the person who had shown such barbarity. "No," he replied; "but perfectly the name of him who showed sensibility."¹ *

It is a singular circumstance, worthy of being recorded

* It is sometimes not uninteresting to follow the career of the wretches who perpetrate such crimes, to their latter end. "In a remote situation," says the Duchess of Abrantès, "on the sea-coast, lived a middle-aged man, in a solitary cottage, unattended by any human being. The police had strict orders from the First Consul to watch him with peculiar care. He died of suffocation, produced by an accident which had befallen him when eating, uttering the

¹ Bert. de
Mollix, 291,
292. Lac.
Pr. Hist. i.
393. Rév.
Mémoires,
xvi. 71.
Th. iii. 8.
Deux Amis,
viii. 301,
302. Prud-
hom. iv. 111.
Hist. Parl.
xvii. 413.
419. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. iii.
372, 373.

as characteristic of the almost incomprehensible state of the human mind during such convulsions, that many of the assassins who put the prisoners to death, showed themselves, on some occasions, feelingly alive to the warmest sentiments of humanity. M. Journiac was fortunate enough, by a combination of presence of mind and good fortune, to obtain an acquittal from the terrible tribunal: in the Abbaye two individuals, strangers to him, pressed his foot to mark when he should speak, and, when acquitted, bore him safe under the arch of spears and sabres through which he had to pass. He offered them money when they had arrived at a place of safety; they refused, and, after embracing him, returned to the work of destruction. Another prisoner, saved in a similar manner, was conducted home with the same solicitude: the murderers, still reeking with the carnage they had committed, insisted on being spectators of the meeting between him and his family; they wept at the scene, and immediately went back with renewed alacrity to the scene of death. After showing Weber, foster-brother to the Queen, who was not known, and escaped by singular presence of mind the fatal tribunal at the Abbaye, a large heap of dead bodies hacked to pieces and thrown together, the national guards and armed mob embraced him with the warmest feeling, and he was hurried amidst similar demonstrations of joy through a long file of armed men.^{1*} It would seem as if, in that convulsive state, all strong emotions rapidly succeed each other in the human

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

32.

Extraordi-
nary feelings
of the mur-
derers.

¹ Weber, ii.
265, 266,
Th. iii. 73,
74. Saint
Meard, Rév.
Mémoires,
xlv. 349.
Bert. de
Moll. Mém.
ii. 212, 213.

most horrid blasphemies, and in the midst of frightful tortures. He had been the principal actor in the murder of the Princess Lamballe."—D'ABRANTÈS, iii. 264.

* "Le même homme, s'étant tourné de mon côté pour montrer un tas de cadavres percés et hachés à coups de sabre, me dit d'un air hagard et féroce—' Vous voyez, citoyen soldat, que nous punissons les traîtres comme ils le méritent.' Je reçus encore l'accolade fraternelle. Je passai ensuite de bras en bras à plus de cent pas, toujours embrassé par les gardes nationaux du faubourg St Antoine, et par une infinité d'autres gens presque tous ivres. Délivré enfin de toutes ces caresses, les deux hommes armés qui me donnaient le bras, me conduisirent dans une église, où se trouvait réuni le petit nombre de personnes que le tribunal populaire avait épargné."—WEBER, ii. 265, 266.

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

33.
Massacre of
the Swiss.

breast : and the mind, wrought up as by the interest of a tragedy, is prepared alike for the most savage deeds of cruelty, or the tenderest emotions of pity.

When massacre was so universal, it may well be conceived that the Swiss, who had been made prisoners on the 10th of August, fifty-four in number, had no chance of escape. The non-commissioned officers and privates were massacred in their cells without even the form of trial ; the officers were brought for a few minutes before Maillard's tribunal, and then turned out to be hewn down by the populace. The Swiss, locked in each other's arms, hesitated at first to go through the fatal wicket, and loudly called for mercy, on the ground that they had only obeyed their orders. "There must be an end of this," cried Maillard ; "let us see who will go out first." "I will be the first," exclaimed a young officer with a noble air. "Show me the gate : let us prove we do not fear death." So saying, he rushed forward with his hands over his head into the uplifted sabres, and perished on the spot. Unable to restrain their impatience, the people broke in and despatched them where they stood. Rapid as the progress of destruction was, it did not keep pace with the wishes of Marat, who came to the Abbaye, and said—"What are these imbeciles about ? They do their work very slowly : by this time ten thousand might have been destroyed. Bid them be quick, and earn more money." In some of the prisons they spared the galley-slaves, who were immediately associated with them in their labours : a hundred and eighty prostitutes, at the Salpêtrière, were saved to minister to the pleasures of the assassins, and three hundred escaped at the other prisons from the same motive : but all the old women were murdered without mercy, and among them many between eighty and ninety years of age.¹

¹ Prudhom.
Crimes de
la Rév. iv.
100, 114,
125. Duval,
Souv. de la
Terreur, ii.
259, 269.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. iii.
312.

Similar atrocities were committed in all the other prisons. Two hundred and eighty-nine perished in the Conciergerie. One woman there was, by an unprece-

dented refinement of cruelty, put to death in a way so inexpressibly frightful that the pen can hardly be brought to recount it.* At the Grand Châtelet nearly as many perished. The bodies of the slain in these two prisons were dragged out and heaped upon the Pont Notre-Dame, where those female furies, aptly termed the “leeches of the guillotine,” turned them curiously over, and piled them on carts, by which they were conveyed, dripping with blood, so as to leave the track of the vehicle marked by a red line, to the quarries of Mont Rouge, where they were thrown into vast caverns. Above eleven hundred persons, confined for political causes, perished in the different prisons of Paris during these massacres, which continued, with no interruption, from the 2d to the 6th September. When the other captives were all destroyed, the assassins, insatiable in their thirst for blood, besieged the Bicêtre, containing several thousand prisoners confined for ordinary offences, having no connection with the state. They defended themselves with such resolution that it became necessary to employ cannon for their destruction. Seven guns were brought up and opened their fire, which beat down the gates ; but the felons within fought with desperate resolution. The multitude, however, were resolutely bent on blood, and continued the contest, by unceasingly bringing up fresh forces, till the felons were overpowered, and all put to death. It took two days, however, to destroy them. At length the murders ceased, from the complete exhaustion of the assassins. The remains of the victims were thrown into trenches, previously prepared by the municipality for their reception ; they were subsequently conveyed to the catacombs, where they were built up, and still remain the monument of crimes which France would willingly bury in oblivion—unfit to be thought of, even in the abodes of death.¹

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

34.

Massacres in
the Concier-
gerie, Bi-
cêtre, and
Salpêtrière.

¹ Prudhom.
iv. 114, 120.
Lac. Pr.
Hist. i. 293.
Th. iii. 83.
Duval, ii.
266, 269.
Bert. de
Moll. ix. 298.
Sismondi,
vi. 397.

* “Les assassins lui coupèrent les mamelles ; après cette barbare et cruelle incision, on lui passa dans la matrice un bouchon de paille, qu’on ne lui ôta que pour la fendre d’un coup de sabre.”—PRUDHOMME, *Crimes de la Révolution*, iv. 113.

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

35.
Dreadful
fate of M. de
Montmorin.

The fate of M. de Montmorin, formerly minister of foreign affairs to Louis, and a warm supporter of the Revolution, was peculiarly frightful. He was arrested during the domiciliary visits, on August 30th, and brought to the bar of the Assembly. His answers, however, were there so clear and satisfactory that he was sent back to the prison of the Abbaye, to await some other ground of accusation. He was one of the earliest victims; and the people carried their ferocity so far, as to impale him, yet alive, on a sharp stake, and bear him in triumph, in that dreadful situation, to the National Assembly! Thus were realised those gloomy presentiments which had retained possession of his mind for six months back, and which Bertrand de Molleville had in vain endeavoured to combat: and thus was too fatally verified the mournful prediction of Madame de Montmorin to Madame de Stael, on the first assembling of the States-general.¹

¹ Vide Ante,
c. iv. § 4.
Bert. de
Moll. Mém.
ii. 211, 212.

36.
Similar ex-
amples of
cruelty in
other coun-
tries.

² Sismondi,
vi. 397.

³ Thucydi-
des, i. 32.

⁴ Chambers'
Rebellions
of Scotland,
iii. 37.
Napier's
Life of Mont-
rose, 274.

During the crusade against the Albigeois, in the south of France, four hundred men and women were publicly burned at Carcassonne, to "the great joy of the crusading warriors."² When the Athenian democracy extinguished the revolt in the island of Mytelene, they passed a decree, ordering the whole vanquished people, with their offspring, to be put to death.³ When the Irish soldiers in Montrose's army were made prisoners, after the battle of Philiphaugh, they were thrown, with their wives and children, from the bridge of Linlithgow, in Scotland: and the bands of the Covenanters stood on the banks of the river with uplifted halberds, and massacred such of the helpless innocents as were thrown undrowned upon the shore. Soon after, the whole captives of that nation in the prisons of Scotland were slaughtered in cold blood.⁴ During the wars of the Roses, quarter on both sides was, for twenty years, refused by the English to each other. Cruelty is not the growth of any particular country; it is not found in a greater degree in France than it would be in any other state similarly situated. It is the unchaining the pas-

sions of the multitude which in all ages and countries produces such effects. CHAP. VIII.

During these terrific scenes, the National Assembly, however anxious to arrest the disorders, did nothing ; the ministry were equally impotent : the terrible municipality ruled triumphant. At the worst period of the massacres, the legislature was engaged in discussing a decree for the punishment of persons guilty of coining bad money. Two municipal officers intimated, upon the 2d of September, that the people were crowding round the gates of the prisons, and praying for instructions ; but the Assembly did nothing. Even the announcement by Fauchet, that two hundred priests had been massacred in the prison of Carmes, led to no measure being adopted. When the slaughter of the priests at that place of confinement could no longer be concealed, they sent a deputation to endeavour to save the victims ; but they only succeeded in rescuing one. On the following day the commissioners of the magistracy appeared at the bar of the Assembly, and assured the deputies that Paris was in the most complete tranquillity, though the murders continued for four days afterwards. The national guard, divided in opinion, hesitated to act ; and Santerre, their new commander, refused to call them out. Roland alone had the courage, at the bar of the Assembly, to exert his talents in the cause of humanity. A few days afterwards, the eloquence of Vergniaud roused the legislature from their stupor ; and he had the resolution to propose, and the influence to carry, a decree, rendering the members of the municipality responsible with their heads for the safety of their captives. But it was too late ; the prisoners were all killed. This tardy act of vigour only rendered the more inexcusable their former treason to the King, and supineness in their duty to the people.¹

1792.
37.
Feeble conduct of the Assembly.

Sept. 7.

¹ Hist. Parl. xvii. 348, 351, 430. Lac. i. 295, 296. Hist. de France, ix. 369. Mig. ii. 205. Th. ii. 76, 77, 79.

The small number of those who perpetrated these murders in the French capital, under the eyes of the legislature, is one of the most instructive facts in the history of

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

38.
Small number of persons who perpetrated all these murders, and inefficiency of the national guard.

revolutions. Marat had long before said, that with two hundred assassins at a louis a-day, he would govern France, and cause three hundred thousand heads to fall ; and the events of the 2d September seemed to justify the assertion. The number of those actually engaged in the massacres did not exceed three hundred, and twice as many more witnessed and encouraged their proceedings at each jail ; yet this handful of men governed Paris and France, with a despotism which three hundred thousand armed warriors afterwards strove in vain to effect. The immense majority of the well-disposed citizens, divided in opinion, irresolute in conduct, and dispersed in different quarters, were incapable of arresting a band of assassins engaged in the most atrocious cruelties of which modern Europe has yet afforded an example,—an important warning to the strenuous and the good in every succeeding age, to combine for defence the moment that the aspiring and the desperate have begun to agitate the public mind ; and never to trust that mere smallness of numbers can be relied on for preventing reckless ambition from destroying irresolute virtue. It is not less worthy of observation, that these atrocious massacres took place in the heart of a city where above fifty thousand men were enrolled in the national guard, and had arms in their hands ; a force specially destined to prevent insurrectionary movements, and support under all changes the majesty of the law. They were so divided in opinion, and the Revolutionists composed so large a part of their number, that nothing whatever was done by them, either on the 10th August, when the King was dethroned, or on the 2d September, when the prisoners were massacred. This puts in a forcible point of view the weakness of such a body, which, being composed of citizens, is distracted by their feelings and actuated by their passions. In ordinary times it may exhibit an imposing array, and be adequate to the repression of smaller disorders :¹ but it is paralysed by the events which throw society into convulsion, and

¹ Barbar, 57.
Louvvet,
Rév. Mém.
xlv. 73.

generally fails at the decisive moment when its aid is most required.

The municipality of Paris wrote an infernal circular to the magistrates of the other cities of France, inviting them to imitate the massacres of the capital.* The advice was not generally followed; but the combined influence of this circular, and of the universal excitement produced by the overthrow of the throne, occasioned in some places tragedies more frightful than had yet stained the progress of the Revolution. On the 30th of August, the magistrates of Paris presented a petition to the Assembly, praying for the transference of the state prisoners in jail at Orleans, with a view to their trial before the high court there, to the capital. This petition, evidently intended, as it afterwards appeared, to bring them within the sphere of the massacres, was ultimately agreed to, and a part of the armed force of Paris, with seven pieces of cannon, was despatched under a vehement Jacobin, named Fournier, to Orleans, where he met with Leonard Bourdon, the commissioner of the Assembly. They immediately entered the prison. On arriving there, they plundered the captives of the whole little property which they still had on their persons, and on the 2d September these unfortunates set out, under the guard of the armed force sent from Paris, for the capital. When they arrived at Versailles, the vast accumulation of people in the streets, and

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39.

Infernal circular of the municipality of Paris, and massacre at Versailles of the prisoners coming from Orleans.

* The circular sent on this occasion to the other municipalities of France by that of Paris, is one of the most curious monuments of the Revolution. It concluded with these words,—“Being informed that hordes of barbarians are advancing against this city, the municipality of Paris loses no time in informing its brethren in all the other departments, that part of the conspirators confined in the prisons have been put to death by the people; an act of justice which appeared indispensable to retain in due subjection the legions of traitors within its walls, at the moment when the principal forces in the city were about to march against the enemy. Without doubt the nation at large, after the long series of treasons which have brought it to the edge of the abyss, *will adopt the same means*, at once so useful and so necessary, and all the French will be able to say, like the people of Paris, ‘We march against the enemy, and we leave none behind us to massacre our wives and children.’ (Signed) Duplain, Panis, Sergeant, Lenfant, Marat, Lefort, Jordeuil, administrators of the Committee of Surveillance established at the Hotel de Ville. Paris, 3d Sept. 1792.”—See *Histoire Parlementaire*, xvii. 433.

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the hollow murmur amongst the crowd, announced to the wretched captives that some horrid scheme was in contemplation, which was speedily put in execution. The carriages of the prisoners were stopped in the Rue de l'Orangerie, the troops and guns drawn up in battle array, and the mob then fell on the victims. Several, among whom was the Duke de Brissac, formerly governor of Paris, long defended themselves vigorously, but they were all at last destroyed, to the number of fifty-seven. De Lessart, formerly minister of the interior, perished here. At the same time, the philanthropic and enlightened La-rochefoucauld, who had entirely retired from political life, was dragged out of his carriage near Gisors, and murdered in the arms of his wife and mother. Not content with this butchery, the assassins next broke into the prisons at Versailles, and murdered twenty-one prisoners confined there. The whole victims were torn in pieces, and their remains affixed on the tops of the rails of the Orangery. To their eternal disgrace, the national guard of Versailles took a part in these massacres; and Danton, minister of justice, refused to interfere when informed of the preparation for them, saying—"The people were resolved on vengeance, and must have it."¹

¹ Bert. de Mollix. 316, 321. Prudhom. iv. 170, 184. Lac. i. 296, 298. Deux Amis, viii. 336, 337.

40.
Massacres at Meaux and Lyons.

A similar massacre, provoked and headed by the commissioners of the Paris municipality, took place at Meaux on 5th September. They proceeded with a furious band to the prison of the town, broke it open, and dragged out fourteen captives, including eight aged ecclesiastics, who were all hewn in pieces in the court of the building. At Lyons, on the 9th, a similar mob, stimulated in the same way, attacked the prisons, and the magistrates, to save the prisoners, ordered them to be removed to Roanne; but the escort was overpowered, and they were all murdered on the road, except one who perished in the river, into which he had thrown himself in an agony of terror. The band of assassins went on to the prison of Roanne, which they also broke open, and there they murdered

seven persons. Among them was the Abbé Lanoix, curé of the parish of St Nizier, a man of a mild and benevolent character, who was cut into pieces, which were brought back by the assassins to Lyons, and suspended in triumph to the trees in the Place Bellecour. No attempt was made by the national guard, or any of the authorities, to prevent or punish these disorders. Elected by the people, they were as impotent to restrain their excesses as the satraps of an eastern despot are to coerce his acts of vengeance.¹

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¹ Prudhom.
iv. 165, 170,
184, 189.

But all these horrors, dark as they are, sink into insignificance compared with the frightful barbarities which took place at Rheims on the 2d and 3d September. On the first of these days M. Guerin, postmaster, and his deputy, were beheaded by the mob, and their bloody limbs distributed among the people; while the Abbé de Lescar, and eleven other curés in the environs, who had refused to take the oath to the constitution, were massacred with refined cruelty, and their mangled limbs carried about in triumph. But their fate was merciful compared with that which overtook their brethren on the following day. The mob loudly declared that they would burn alive the priests who did not take the oath; and for this purpose they erected a huge pile of fagots in the principal square of the town, in the construction of which they obliged all the citizens to assist. Next day two priests, the Abbé Romain and the Abbé Alexandre, dean of the Cathedral, were brought to the edge of the pile, and desired to take the oath. Both refused with the constancy of ancient martyrs. Upon this Romain was thrown alive into the flames, and burned to death, his cries being drowned by shouts of "Vive la Nation!"²

41.
Frightful
barbarities
at Rheims.² Prudhom.
Crimes de
la Rév. iv.
189, 195.

The Abbé Alexandre, overwhelmed with the horrors of the spectacle, now declared he would take the oath; they nevertheless threw him into the fire, and actually sent for his nephew Heyberger, who lived with him, whom they compelled to bring fagots to feed the flames. The unhappy

42.
Burning of
priests and
others there.

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victim continued to exclaim, as he burned, he would take the oath, and waved his hand in the midst of the flames : at last he was drawn out, and they enjoyed, with savage yells, the spectacle of his convulsions ! Finally a common workman, named Laurent, was brought to the stake, where he perished in the midst of the most frightful tortures. His wife was compelled to be the witness of this awful scene : on her knees beside the burning pile, with her hands uplifted to heaven, she awaited her own fate, and the demons were enjoying, in anticipation, the tortures to which they would expose her, when, prompted by a sudden inspiration, she said she was with child. "What does that signify ?" replied the barbarians who stirred the fagots ; but a cry arose in the crowd that she should be examined, and thus she was saved. These frightful cruelties took place in the presence of the whole municipal officers of Rheims, and of five thousand armed national guards ! This was the extreme point of individual cruelty during the Revolution. Infinitely greater numbers were subsequently put to death, but not in so shocking a way. That most awful and atrocious of spectacles, of a human being intentionally burned to death, will not again occur in this history till it reappears, to their eternal disgrace, under circumstances of greater, because more cold-blooded and unpardonable cruelty, among the Anglo-Saxon race, and amidst the boasted freedom and civilisation of republican America.¹

¹ Prudhom.
Crimes de
la Révo-
lution, iv.
191, 194.

43.
Enormous
plunder by
the muni-
cipality of
Paris.
Sept. 17.

The plunder arising from the property of so many victims procured immense wealth to the municipality of Paris. Not only were the plate of the churches, and all the movables of the emigrants, seized by their orders, but the whole effects of the victims massacred in the prisons were by them put under sequestration, and deposited in the vast warehouses belonging to the Committee of Surveillance. Neither the Assembly, nor the Convention, nor any other authority, ever could obtain from them either an account of the amount of this plunder, or how

it was disposed of. The magistrates went a step further, and, of their own authority, sold the furniture of all the great hotels, on which the national seal had been put in consequence of the emigration of their proprietors. Nor were their inferior agents behind in the work of spoliation. Bands of twenty and thirty threw themselves on persons seemingly possessed of property, in the streets, and robbed the men of their watches, the women of their rings and chains. Under pretence of domiciliary visits, pillage in private houses became general, and the sufferers were too happy to submit to the loss of their property to save their lives. The minister of the interior was unable to prevent these scandalous abuses, though he loudly complained of them to the Assembly : all the inferior agents of authority were in the interest of the municipality ; and the national guards, remodelled under the title of armed sections, and composed of the most worthless classes, were in a state of complete disorganisation. One night, soon after, the jewel office in the Tuileries was pillaged, and all the splendid ornaments of the crown disappeared for ever. The seals affixed on the locks were removed, but no marks of violence appeared on them ; which clearly showed that the abstraction was done by order of the city authorities, and not by popular violence. One of the finest jewels afterwards appeared in the hands of Sergent, a member of the committee who signed the circular calling upon the rest of France to imitate the massacres of the prisons in Paris. Such were the first effects of the popular election of a magistracy in the French capital !¹

Roland was now sensible that the democratic municipality of Paris was wholly inconsistent with any government whatever. “Yesterday,” said he, “they declared at the tribune of the Electoral Assembly against the executive power : the people were roused to take vengeance on the deputies who voted against the accusation of Lafayette : already placards are prepared to announce my own denunciation, which has been read at the municipality, and

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Sept. 17.

¹ Hist. Parl. xviii. 457, 462, 463. Deux Amis, viii. 338, 339. Th. iii. 129, 131.

44.
Roland in vain denounces these atrocities.

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xviii. 445.
Marat,
l'Ami du
Peuple, No.
682, 684.
Deux Amis,
viii. 338,
339.

45.
Termina-
tion of the
Legislative
Assembly.

approved of by them. Eight days have elapsed since the Assembly was implored (and at this time days are ages) to take measures to support the executive power, and secure respect to the law. Without this, not Paris alone, but the whole kingdom will be overturned." Nor was Roland without good grounds for these anticipations : for already Marat had publicly intimated in his journal, that the Revolution would retrograde unless two hundred thousand heads fell, and designated four hundred members of the Assembly as the first to be sacrificed to the vengeance of the people ; and the temper displayed at the municipality evinced clearly that they would not hesitate to carry these suggestions into effect.¹

It was in the midst of these horrors that the Legislative Assembly approached its termination. Its history is full of interest to those who study the workings of the human mind in periods of national convulsion. Its opening was preceded by a deceitful calm : the ambition of party, the fury of passion, seemed for a time to be stilled ; and the monarch, hailed by the acclamations of the multitude, tasted for a few days the sweets of popular administration. The Constituent Assembly had declared the Revolution finished ; the King had accepted the constitution : the days of anarchy were supposed to be past. But those who "disturb the peace of all the world can seldom rule it when 'tis wildest." The Legislative Assembly terminated amid bloodshed and carnage ; with an imprisoned King, an absent nobility, an insurgent people ; in the midst of the murder of the royalist, and with the axe suspended over the head of the patriotic class. Eight thousand three hundred persons perished of a violent death during its short existence of eleven months ! The destruction which its measures brought upon the higher ranks was speedily, by its successor, inflicted upon its own leaders. Such is the inevitable march of revolutions, when the passions of the multitude are brought into collision with the unsupported benevolence of the philanthropic, and vigour and unani-

mity are not displayed by the friends of order and the holders of property ; when reason and justice are appealed to on one side, and selfish ambition is arrayed on the other. With less discussion on abstract rights, and more attention to present dangers, with less speculation, and more action, this Assembly might have arrested the progress of the Revolution. A vigorous prosecution of the victory in the Champ de Mars, a charge of five hundred horse in the Place of the Carrousel on the 10th August, would have prevented the overthrow of the throne and the reign of Robespierre.¹

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¹ Prudhom.
Crimes de
la Rév. iv.
Table 1.
Lac. Pr.
Hist. i. 108.
Hist. de
France, ix.
149, 230.

The NATIONAL CONVENTION began under darker auspices. The 10th August, and the subsequent triumphs of the municipality over the Assembly, had given the ascendant of victory to the democratic class: the great and inert mass of the people were disposed, as in all commotions, to range themselves on the victorious side. The sections of Paris, under the influence of Robespierre and Marat, returned the most revolutionary deputies ; those of most other towns followed their example. The Jacobins, with their affiliated clubs, on this occasion exercised an overwhelming influence over all France. The parent club at Paris had, with this view, printed and circulated in every department lists of all the votes passed during the session, to instruct the electors. All the deputies who had voted against the desires of the popular party, and especially all such as had supported the acquittal of Lafayette, were particularly pointed out for rejection. At Paris, where the elections took place on the 2d September, amidst all the excitement and horrors of the massacres in the prisons, the violent leaders of the municipality, who had organised the revolt of the 10th August, exercised an irresistible sway over the citizens. Robespierre and Danton were the first named, amidst unanimous shouts of applause ; after them, Camille Desmoulins, Tallien, Osselin, Fréron, Anacharsis Clootz, Fabre d'Eglantine, David the celebrated painter, Collot

46.
Elections
for the Na-
tional Con-
vention.

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1792.

¹ Deux
Amis, viii.
352, 353.
Bert. de
Moll. x. 2, 7.
Hist. Parl.
xviii. Jour-
nal des Ja-
cobins, Sept.
17.

47.
Parties in
the New As-
sembly, and
influence of
the Jacobin
clubs over
France.

d'Herbois, Billaud Varennes, Legendre, Panis, Sergent, almost all implicated in the massacres in the prisons, were also chosen. To these was added the Duke of Orleans, who had abdicated his titles, and was called Philippe Egalité. In a word, the deputies of Paris consisted of the leaders who had organised the revolt of the 10th August, and subsequently prepared and rewarded the massacres in the prisons. The deputies from the rest of France were almost all of the same description, insomuch that the most conservative part of the new Assembly were the Girondists who had overturned the throne.¹

From the first opening of the Convention, the Girondists occupied the right, and the Jacobins the seats on the summit of the left; whence their designation of "The Mountain" was derived. The former had the majority of votes, the greater part of the departments having returned men of comparatively moderate principles. But the latter possessed a great advantage, in having on their side all the members of the city of Paris, who directed the mob, always ready to crowd at their call round the doors of the Assembly, and in being supported by the municipality, which had already grown into a ruling power in the state, and had become the great centre of the democratic party. A neutral body, composed of those members whose principles were not yet declared, was called the Plain, or Marais; it ranged itself with the Girondists, until terror compelled its members to coalesce with the victorious side. Connected with the parent club of the Jacobins at Paris was a multitude of affiliated societies in every considerable town of France, who trained up disciples for the parent establishment, disseminated its principles, and sent up continual supplies of energetic ambition to feed the flame in the capital. The magistracy also had established relations with all the municipalities of France, who, elected by almost universal suffrage, had generally fallen into the hands of the most violent party. The Jacobins, therefore, ruled the whole effective power of

the state ; nothing remained to the Girondists but the ministry, who, thwarted by the municipality, had no authority in Paris. The army, raised during the excitement of the Revolution, could not be trusted against the popular leaders ; if it could, the distance at which it was placed, and its active occupation on the frontier, precluded it from being of any service in resisting the insurrections of the capital.¹

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¹ Mig. i. 216.
Lac. ii. 10.

The two rival parties mutually indulged in recriminations, in order to influence the public mind. The Jacobins incessantly reproached the Girondists with desiring to dissolve the Republic ; to establish three-and-twenty separate democratic states, held together, like the American provinces, by a mere federal union ; and though this design was never seriously entertained by them, except when the advance of the Duke of Brunswick threatened to lead to the capture of Paris, the imprudent conversations of Brissot, and other leaders of the party, and the extravagant admiration which they always professed for the institutions of America, were sufficient to give a colour to the accusation. Nothing more was requisite to render them in the highest degree unpopular in Paris, the very existence of which depended on its remaining, through all the phases of government, the seat of the ruling power. The Girondists retorted upon their adversaries charges better founded, but not so likely to inflame the populace. They reproached them with endeavouring to establish in the municipality of Paris a power superior to the legislature of all France ; with overawing the deliberations of the Convention, by menacing petitions, or the open display of brute force ; and secretly preparing for their favourite leaders, Danton, Robespierre, and Marat, a triumvirate of power, which would speedily extinguish all the freedom that had been acquired. The first part of the accusation was well founded even then ; of the last, time soon afforded an ample confirmation.²

48.
Mutual re-
criminations
of the Giron-
dists and
Jacobins.² Deux
Amis, ix. 4,
7. Bert. de
Moll. x. 10,
11. Th. iii.
142, 143.

The Convention met at first in one of the halls of the

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49.

Abolition of
royalty, and
new calen-
dar intro-
duced.

State of the
finances.
Sept. 23.

Sept. 22.

Tuileries, but immediately adjourned to the Salle du Manège, where its subsequent sittings were held. Its first step was, on the motion of the Abbé Grégoire, and amidst unanimous transports, to declare royalty abolished in France, and to proclaim a republic; and by another decree it was ordered, that the old calendar taken from the year of Christ's birth should be abandoned, and that all public acts should be dated from the first year of the French republic. This era began on the 22d September 1792. Its next care was the state of the finances. From the report of M. Cambon, the minister of finance, it appeared that the preceding Assemblies had authorised the fabrication of two thousand seven hundred millions francs in assignats, or £108,000,000 sterling; a prodigious sum to have been issued in three years of almost continued peace, and clearly demonstrating that the revenue, from ordinary sources, had almost entirely disappeared. Of this immense fund, however, only fifteen millions francs (£600,000) remained. A new issue, therefore, became indispensable, and was immediately ordered on the security of the national domains, which were rapidly increasing, and, from the continued confiscation of the estates of the emigrants, now embraced more than two-thirds of the landed property of France.¹

¹ Calend. Republ. p. 1. Th. iii. 151. Moniteur, Sept. 24, p. 1141. Deux Amis, ix. 18. Hist. Parl. xix. 94, 95.

50.

Formation
of a new
Constitu-
tion entirely
democratic.
Sept. 24.

A still more democratic constitution than that framed by the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies, was at the same time established. All the requisites for election to any office whatever, were, on the motion of Egalité, abolished. It was no longer necessary to select judges from legal men, nor magistrates from the class of proprietors. All persons, in whatever rank, were declared eligible to every situation; and the right of voting in the primary assemblies was conferred on every man above the age of twenty-one years. Absolute equality, in its literal sense, was established. Universal suffrage was the basis on which government rested. Roland,

at the same time, gave a frightful picture of the massacres which the Jacobin emissaries had spread over all France. "The disorders of Paris," said he, "have been too faithfully imitated in the departments. It is not anarchy which is to be accused as the cause of these calamities, but tyrants of a new species, who have sprung up in our newly enfranchised France. It is from Paris that these daily incitements to murder proceed. How can we preserve the people from the most frightful misery, when so many citizens are obliged to remain in concealment for fear of their lives ; when invitations to pillage, murder, rapine, and lists of proscription, daily appear on the walls of the capital? How shall we frame a constitution for France, if the Convention charged with it deliberates under the daggers of assassins?" After a vehement debate, a decree against the instigators to murder, and for the establishment of a departmental guard, was passed ; but subsequent events prevented it from being ever carried into execution.¹

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¹ Deux
Amis, ix.
121, 123.
Moniteur,
Sept. 25, pp.
1139, 1140.
Th. iii. 152,
155.

The leaders of the Girondists, foreseeing the character of Robespierre, directed their first attacks against him. Osselin publicly accused him of aspiring to the dictatorship. "I invite," said he, "all the members of the municipality of Paris to come and explain themselves at that bar. Let each of us declare that he wishes to live only for liberty and equality, and that he will support the most democratic constitution possible. There is a contrary party ; there is a triumvirate : Robespierre, I denounce you as its head." Robespierre's reply was characteristic of his principles :—"Do you really believe that I aspire to the dictatorship? Undeceive yourselves. It is no ground for accusation merely to say I aspire to be dictator. Where are the facts to support such a charge? None such have been brought forward : you seem to suppose that the simple preferring such a charge against me is enough to cause an accusation to be raised. Are you ignorant, then, of the force of truth, of

51.
Accusation
of Robes-
pierre by
Osselin and
Barbaroux.
Sept. 25.

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¹ Moniteur,
Sept. 26, pp.
1143, 1146.
Hist. Parl.
xix. 96, 100,
105.

52.
Accusation
of Marat.
Sept. 27.

² Marat,
Jour. de la
République,
No. 22, 29.
Moniteur,
Sept. 27.
Hist. Parl.
xix. 96, 98.
Mig. 218.
219. Lac.
ii. 6, 8.
Th. iii. 163.

the energy of innocence, when defended with imperturbable courage? You may accuse me; but the nation will be my judge: it is from them that I expect my acquittal: it is full time to know if we are really traitors: if we have in truth harboured designs against the Republic: if we have flattered the people—what do I say?—flattered the people?—you cannot flatter the people: you may easily flatter a tyrant: but *to flatter twenty-five millions of men is as impossible as to flatter the Deity himself.*”* The leaders of the Girondists, not aware of the formidable character of their opponent, passed to the order of the day, and so quashed the proceedings.¹

Marat was next the object of accusation: a thrill of horror ran through the Convention when he appeared before them: the massacres which he had so strenuously recommended in his journal, “*L’Ami du Peuple*,” were still fresh in the recollection of the deputies. Vergniaud read the infamous circular of the municipality of Paris, inviting the authorities of France to imitate the massacres of September, to which his signature was attached; and a number of that journal, where it was coldly calculated that seventy thousand heads must fall before liberty could be established. The galleries openly applauded the proposal. Another of the Girondists soon after read another paper, published a few days before by the accused, in which he said—“One consideration alone overwhelms me, and that is, that all my efforts to save the people will come to nothing without a new insurrection. When I behold the temper of the majority of the deputies in the National Convention, I despair of the public safety. If during its first eight sittings, the foundations of a constitution are not laid, nothing more need be expected from its labours.”² Fifty years of

* These last words paint Robespierre’s character to the life. The maxim, “*Vox populi, vox Dei*,” and the belief that the nation can do no wrong, whatever individuals may do, were his ruling principles, and steady adherence to them led at once to his long power and to his ultimate ruin.

anarchy await you, from which you will never emerge, but in the hands of a dictator, a true patriot and statesman. O misguided people! if you but knew how to act." At these words, furious cries interrupted the reader; some applauding, others exclaiming, "To the Abbaye! to the guillotine!"

Marat mounted the tribune to reply; it was the first time he had been seen there, and such was the horror at his aspect, that it was long before he could obtain a hearing. He acknowledged the writing to be his, however, and refused to disavow its contents. "If the people," said he, "had been wise, they would have cut off five hundred heads on the day the Bastille was taken. Already a hundred thousand patriots have fallen from that omission; a hundred thousand more will fall if it is not now done. If the people halt in their career, anarchy is certain. I have never disguised my opinions. I have published them all with my name. To ask me to retract," he added, "is to insist that I should shut my eyes to what I see, and my ears to what I hear; there is no power on earth which can force me to such a change of ideas: I can answer for the purity of my heart, but I cannot change my thoughts; they have sprung from the nature of things." The galleries rang with acclamations. The Jacobins, with tumultuous shouts, testified their applause; many irresolute members, horror-struck at the proscriptions, but yet afraid of their authors, quitted the Assembly. The accused, perceiving his advantage, drew a pistol from his pocket: "Blush," he exclaimed, "for your rashness, in thus accusing the patriots: If the proposal for an accusation be carried, I will blow out my brains at the foot of the tribune. Such is the reward of my labours, my sufferings, my misery, in the cause of the people!"¹ At this apostrophe the shouts of the gallery were so vehement that the very building shook to its foundation. Terror mastered every heart. The Assembly concealed its fear under the mask of contempt,

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53.
Marat's
reply.

¹ Moniteur, Sept. 27, pp. 1149, 1150. Lac. ii. 8, 9. Th. iii. 167, 170. Hist. de la Conv. i. 75, 76.

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1792.

54.
Louvet
arraigns
Robes-
pierre.
Oct. 29.

and, on the motion of Tallien, voted that the Republic was one and indivisible, and dismissed the accused unpunished, to reap the fruits of a real victory.

A more formidable accusation was shortly afterwards brought forward by Louvet, one of the ablest and most intrepid leaders of the Gironde, against Robespierre. Roland, as minister of the interior, now thoroughly alarmed both for the Republic and himself, had made a luminous statement of the situation of the metropolis, in which he boldly exposed the sanguinary measures of the municipality. "When the principles of revolt and carnage," said he, "are openly avowed and applauded, not only in clubs, but in the bosom of the Convention, who can doubt that some hidden partisans of the ancient régime, some pretended friends of the people, veiling their wickedness under the mask of patriotism, have conceived the design of overturning the constitution, and slaking their thirst for blood and gold in the midst of public ruin? The situation of the Republic is expressed in a few words: administrative bodies without power; the municipality despotic; the people good, but deceived; the public force excellent, but ill commanded; the Convention delaying to take the most necessary steps to insure the public safety. I know this statement will ruin my popularity, but I prefer my duty to my life." He then read a letter from the president of the second section of the criminal tribunal, announcing that his own life and that of his colleagues were menaced, and that, in the language of the times, a *new bleeding* was requiring for the state. At this announcement, all eyes were turned to Robespierre, who immediately mounted the tribune, and exclaimed, "No one will dare to accuse me to my face."¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xix. 410,
415.

55.
His power-
ful speech.

"I accuse you," said Louvet with a firm voice and unshrinking eye: "Yes, Robespierre, I accuse you." The tyrant was moved at the glance of his adversary, whose talent and courage he had previously experienced in the

hall of the Jacobins. Louvet then, in an energetic and eloquent speech, traced the character and actions of his opponent. He followed Robespierre to the Club of the Jacobins, the Municipality, the Electoral Assembly, eternally calumniating his adversaries and flattering the mob ; taking advantage of the passions of a blind multitude, urging it at pleasure to every excess ; insulting in its name the majesty of the legislature, and compelling the sovereign power to issue the decrees he commanded, under the pain of rebellion ; directing, though unseen, the murders and robberies of September, to support the usurpation of the municipality by means of terror ; sending emissaries through all France to instigate the commission of similar crimes, and induce the provinces to follow the example, and obey the authority of Paris ; incessantly occupied with his own praises, and magnifying the grandeur and power of the people from whom he sprang. "The glory of the revolt of the 10th August," he added, "is common to all ; but the glory of the massacres of September 2d belongs to you. On you and your associates may it rest for ever ! The people of Paris know how to combat, but not how to murder ; they were seen in a body before the Tuileries on the glorious 10th August ; but a few hundred assassins alone perpetrated the massacres of September. The eloquence of Roland spoke in vain ; the tutelary arm of Pétion was enchained ; Danton refused to move ; the presidents of the sections waited for orders from the general in command, which never arrived ; the officers of the municipality, with their official scarfs, presided at the executions ; and the orders you had given were too fatally obeyed."¹

The Assembly was strongly moved by the eloquence of Louvet, but he was feebly supported by his friends among the Girondists. He repeatedly appealed to Pétion, Vergniaud, and the other leaders, to support his statements ; but they had not the firmness boldly to state the truth. Had they testified a fourth part of what they

¹ Hist. Parl.
xix. 423,
436. Moni-
teur, Oct.
30, pp. 1292,
1294.

56.
Feeble con-
duct of the
Girondists.

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VIII.

1792.

knew, the accusation must have been instantly voted, and the tyrant might have been crushed at once. As it was, Robespierre, fearful of its effects, demanded eight days to prepare for his defence. In the interval, the whole machinery of terror was put in force: the Jacobins thundered out accusations against the intrepid accuser, and all the leaders of the Mountain were indefatigable in their efforts to strike fear into their opponents. "The object of the Girondists," said Robespierre the younger at the Jacobins, "is clear. They want to inculcate the heroes of the 10th August as the authors of the massacres of September, to bring about a counter-revolution. They would destroy in detail all the patriots; Robespierre first; next Danton, Marat, and Santerre; Merlin and Chabot will soon follow; then the municipality of Paris will be the chosen victim; then the Faubourg St Antoine, and the forty-eight sections of Paris. M. Louvet himself has justified the municipality; for he commenced one of the placards of the *Sentinelle*—'Honour to the grand council of the municipality: it has sounded the tocsin: it has saved the country!'" By degrees the impression cooled, fear resumed its sway, and the accused mounted the tribune at the end of the week with the air of a victor. The deputies, mastered by terror, affected to regard the accusation as a private quarrel between Louvet and Robespierre, and felt no apprehension for a man whom they regarded, as Barère said, "as a man of the day—a little mover of discord."¹

¹ Journal
des Jacobins, Nov.
1st and 6th,
No. 93.
Louvet, 52.

57.
Reply of
Robes-
pierre.

In the conclusion of his address, which was nervous and forcible, Robespierre observed, in allusion to the massacres of September 2d—"Without doubt," said he, "the massacres in the prisons were illegal; but what was the revolt on 10th August, or on 14th July? If we are to go back to what is *legal*, who can defend the Revolution, or save you all from a conviction for high treason? Beware how, by such doctrines, you cast a doubt on the origin of your own power. Without illegal measures

despotism never yet was shaken ; for what sovereign will establish legal means for his own overthrow ? The sensibility which laments only the enemies of liberty, is ever suspicious ! Cease to agitate the bloody robe of the tyrant before my eyes, or I will believe you wish to replace Rome in its fetters ! Eternal calumniators ! would you disgrace the Republic in its cradle, and furnish arms to all Europe against the Revolution which has produced it ? It is said that an innocent individual has perished. The number of the sufferers has been greatly exaggerated ; but supposing there was one such, it was doubtless too much. He was perhaps a good citizen, one of our best friends. Weep for him—weep even for the unworthy citizens who have fallen under the sword of popular justice ; but let your grief, like every human thing, have a termination. But let us, at the same time, reserve some tears for more touching calamities : Weep ! a hundred thousand citizens sacrificed by tyranny ! Weep ! our fellow-citizens massacred in their cradles, or in the arms of their mothers ! Have you no brothers, or children, or wives, to revenge ? The family of French legislators is their country—is the whole human race, excepting tyrants and their supporters. Weep, then, humanity debased under an odious yoke ; but be consoled by the reflection, that by calming unworthy discord, you will secure the happiness of your own country, and prepare that of the world.”¹

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Divided by opposite opinions, the Assembly willingly closed with the proposal of Robespierre to put an end to these personal altercations, and pass to the order of the day. Barbaroux and Lanjuinais vainly endeavoured to maintain the accusation ; the leaders of the Gironde themselves, irresolute in action, hesitated to support them. “ If, indeed,” said Barère, “ there existed in the republic a man born with the genius of Cæsar, or the boldness of Cromwell : if there was to be found here a man with the talent of Sylla, and his dangerous means of elevation ; if

¹ Hist. Parl.
xx. 208, 213.
Moniteur,
Nov. 6.

58.
Irresolution
of the As-
sembly, and
the accusa-
tion is
quashed.
Nov. 5.

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VIII.

1792.

we had amongst us a legislator of vast ability, boundless ambition, and profound dissimulation; a general, for example, returning loaded with laurels to dictate laws to your choice, or insult the rights of the people,—I would be the first to propose against him a decree of accusation. But let us *cease to waste our time on men who will fill no place in history; let us not put pigmies on pedestals*; the civic crowns of Robespierre are mingled with cypress.” The agitation for some time was extreme in the Assembly, and Barbaroux, Lanjuinais, and Louvet strenuously contended for a reply to Robespierre. But they were deserted by their party, who, like all other men without nerve, think they will avert danger by postponing a collision. At length it was nearly unanimously agreed to pass to the order of the day. The Girondists flattered themselves that this would extinguish Robespierre’s influence as completely as exile or death, and actually joined with the Jacobins in preventing the reply of Louvet—a fatal error, which France had cause to lament with tears of blood.¹*

59.
Weakness
of the Giron-
dists on this
occasion.

It was now evident that the Girondists were no match for their terrible adversaries. The men of action on their side, Louvet, Barbaroux, and Lanjuinais, in vain strove to rouse them to the necessity of vigorous measures in contending with such enemies. Their constant reply was, that they would not be the first to commence the shedding of blood. Their only vigour manifested itself in

* The press in Paris, as usual in periods of revolutionary excitement, had already adopted the system of reporting only the speeches of the popular leaders, and this appears in an especial manner in the report of this debate in the *Moniteur*. This was admitted to Robespierre by its editor.—“Cependant vous devez avoir remarqué que *toujours* le *Moniteur* a rapporté avec beaucoup plus d’étendue les discours de la Montagne que les autres. Je n’ ai donné qu’un court extrait de la première accusation qui fut faite contre vous par Louvet, tandis que j’ai inséré en entier votre réponse. J’ai rapporté presque en entier *tous les discours qui ont été* prononcés pour la mort du Roi, et je ne citais quelques extraits des autres qu’autant que j’y étais indisputablement obligé pour conserver quelque caractère d’impartialité. Je puis dire avec assurance que la publicité que j’ai donnée à vos deux discours et à celui de Barère n’a pas peu contribué à déterminer l’opinion de l’Assemblée et des départemens.”—*Papiers Inédits trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 130; *Rédacteur du Moniteur à ROBESPIERRE*, 18 Juin 1793.

declamation, their whole wisdom in abstract discussion. They had now become humane in intention, and moderate in counsel, though they were far from having been so in the earlier stages of the Revolution ; they were fitted to add to the prosperity of a republic in peace, but totally unequal to the task of guiding it in periods of agitation. They were too honourable to believe in the wickedness of their opponents, too scrupulous to adopt the measures requisite to disarm, too destitute of moral courage to be able to crush them. When warned of the necessity of striking a decisive blow, they replied, with the most deplorable *sang-froid*, that it was better not to irritate men of a violent temperament. The only weapons they could be prevailed on to employ were reason and eloquence, while their adversaries were daily sharpening their poniards. "It was easy to foresee," says Louvet, "what would be the issue of such a contest."¹

¹ Barba-
roux, 68, 70.
Louvét, 56,
57. Th. iii.
231. Buzot,
132.

But in truth the evil lay much deeper than Louvet is inclined to admit ; and the Girondists, now that they had become the executive, and were striving with a lower and yet more ferocious band of democrats, experienced the necessary effects of, and just retribution for, that destruction of the throne which they themselves had accomplished, and that fatal disbanding of the constitutional guard which they had so pertinaciously forced on the reluctant Louis. It was the want of an armed force at their command, to secure the freedom of their deliberations, and protect them from the insurgent mobs of the capital, which was the real evil. The dreadful massacres of the 10th August and the 2d September had struck such a terror into the Assembly, that whenever there was an appearance of rousing the populace, they were fain to submit. Resistance was impossible on the part of an unarmed body of legislators, in presence of an armed and infuriated rabble, which had drunk deeply of blood, and yet thirsted for more. The Jacobins were perfectly aware of this advantage, and accordingly, while they were daily

60.
Real seat of
the evil lay
in the de-
struction of
the execu-
tive.

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

strengthening and increasing the armed force of the sections at the command of the municipality, they strenuously resisted the slightest approach towards the establishment of any guard or civic force for the defence of the Convention. Roland had made repeated attempts to get a decree passed for the establishment of such a force ; but they were all defeated by the agitation raised in the Jacobin club, and the threat of an insurrection. It was the destruction of the executive which induced all the horrors of the Revolution, for it left the legislature at the mercy of the mob of Paris !¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xix. 550,
552.

61.

Vain attempt to establish a municipal guard for the Convention, and menacing language of the sections of Paris at the bar of the Assembly.
Oct. 23.

Having at length become sensible of their weakness from this cause, the Girondists brought forward a proposal for an armed guard for the Convention. The populace was immediately put in motion. The menacing language of the deputies of the sections of Paris, who attended at the bar of the Convention to remonstrate against the proposed guard, is one of the most instructive proofs that exists of the state of thralldom to which they were reduced. “Mandatories of the sovereign people,” said they, “you see before you the deputies of the sections of Paris. They come to tell you eternal truths : to recall you to the principles which nature and reason have engraven in the hearts of all freemen. No more words—we demand deeds. It has been proposed to put you on a level with tyrants, by surrounding you with an armed guard.” At these words a violent storm arose in the Assembly ; the President covered his face in despair. Waiting patiently till the din had ceased, the orator resumed—“I repeat, they have proposed to put you on a level with tyrants, by surrounding you with a guard composed differently from that which now constitutes the public strength. The sections of Paris, after having maturely weighed the principles on which the sovereignty of the people rests, now declare to you, by us, that it regards that project as odious, its execution dangerous. We will attack that principle in front, as vigorously as our armies on the

frontiers combat our enemies. We are now defending the entire Republic; Paris has made the Revolution—Paris has given liberty to France—Paris will maintain it.” Overawed and subjugated, the Assembly were glad to conceal their weakness by passing to the order of the day, and inviting the deputation to the honour of the sitting.¹

In the midst of these vehement passions, laws still more stringent and sanguinary were brought forward against the priests and emigrants. So rapidly had the Revolution advanced, that they now excited very little attention, and were passed, as it were, by acclamation. First, it was decreed that every Frenchman taken with arms against France in his hands, should be put to death; and soon after, that “the French emigrants are for ever banished from the territory of France, and those who return shall be punished with death.” A third decree directed that all their property, movable and immovable, should be confiscated to the service of the state. These decrees were rigidly executed: and though almost unnoticed amidst the bloody deeds which at the same period stained the Revolution, ultimately produced the most lasting and irremediable effects.²

At length the prostration of the Assembly before the armed sections of Paris had become so excessive, that Buzot and Barbaroux, the most intrepid of the Girondists, brought forward two measures which, if they could have been carried, would have emancipated the legislature from this odious thralldom. Buzot proposed to establish a guard specially for the protection of the Convention, drawn from young men chosen from the different departments. Barbaroux at the same time brought forward four decrees, ably conceived, which, if carried into execution, would have effectually checked the usurpations of the municipality. By the first, the capital was to cease to be the seat of the legislature, when it lost its claim to their presence, by failing to protect them from insult. By the second, the troops of the Fédérés and the national

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VIII.

1792.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xix. 550,
551.62.
More severe
laws passed
against the
emigrants.
Oct. 28.² Hist. Parl.
xix. 370.
Deux Amis,
ix. 236.63.
Proposed
measures of
the Girondists
against the
Municipality.
Oct. 20.

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VIII.

1792.

cavalry were to be charged, along with the armed sections, with the protection of the legislature. By the third, the Convention was to constitute itself into a court of justice, for the trial of all conspirators against its authority. By the fourth, the Convention suspended the municipality of Paris. This would have established an effectual counterpoise to the influence of the populace of Paris, and have been a decisive blow to the Jacobins and municipality of that city. Robespierre combated the proposal with all his power. "Paris is now tranquil," said he.—"The blood of September 2d is yet reeking," replied Vergniaud. "The authority of the Convention is now universally respected:" "You yourself daily call it in question in your seditious assemblies, your sanguinary journals." "Such a decree would be a libel on the people of Paris:" "They groan, as well as ourselves, under the assassins who oppress them." "You wish to create a tyranny:" "On the contrary, we strive to put an end to yours." "You would establish a prætorian band:" "You rule by means of a horde of brigands." "You are treading in the steps of Sylla:" "You have the ambition of Cromwell." These angry recriminations had no effect but to divert the Assembly from the importance of the real object at issue; and, fearful of present danger, they rejected the only means of avoiding it in future, by delivering themselves, unprotected, to the mob of the capital. Thus the Girondist ministry experienced the fatal consequences of the base betrayal of their sovereign on occasion of the disbanding of the constitutional guard, and were fast descending the gulf into which that step had precipitated him.¹

The Jacobins skilfully availed themselves of these important manifestations of distrust, to give additional currency to the report, that the Girondists intended to transport the seat of government to the southern provinces. This rumour rapidly gained ground with the populace, and augmented their dislike at the ministry. Their opponents

¹ Hist. Parl. xix. 454, 457. Moniteur, 31st Oct., Lac. ii. 12, 13. Mig. i. 225. Th. iii. 221.

64.
The Jacobins spread the report of a division of the Republic.

treated the accusation with contempt ; a striking proof of their ignorance of the trifling foundations on which popular favour or dislike is founded. On every occasion the democrats pressed for a decree in favour of the unity and indivisibility of the Republic ; thereby insinuating the belief that a federal union was contemplated by their adversaries—a project of all others the most unpopular in the central city of Paris, and the report of which was afterwards productive of the most ruinous consequences to the moderate party. In truth, the suspicions of the Jacobins on this point were not so destitute of foundation as their leaders in public maintained. Madame Roland conceived it was by a union of federal republics that the freedom of France could alone be secured ; and this opinion had in secret now come to be shared by all the leading men of her party, who felt daily the ruinous effects of the armed force of Paris, which their adversaries had at their disposal. In the *Courrier des Départements*, which was conducted by their party, the project of a federal union was openly advocated.¹

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1792.

¹ *Courrier des Départements*, xl. p. 163. *Hist. Parl.* xx. 47, 50. *Lac.* ii. 14. *Th.* iii. 229.

All these preliminary struggles were essays of strength by the two parties, prior to the grand question which was now destined to attract the eyes of Europe and the world. This was the TRIAL OF LOUIS XVI. The Jacobins had several motives for urging this measure. By placing the King's life in peril, they hoped to compel the Girondists openly to espouse his cause, and thereby ruin them without redemption in the eyes of the people ; by engaging the popular party in so decisive a step, they knew that they would best preclude any chance of return to a royalist government. They were desirous, moreover, of taking out of the hands of the Girondists, and the moderate part of the Convention, the formation of a republican government ; and they were probably of opinion that the memory of the dead was less to be feared than the vengeance of the living, and that a dethroned king was a dangerous neighbour to an infant democracy. To prepare

65.
Preparation for the trial of Louis, and violent agitation raised by the Jacobins on the subject.

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the nation for this great event, and familiarise them with the tragedy in which it was intended to terminate, the most vigorous measures were taken by the Jacobins over all France. In their central club at Paris the question was repeatedly canvassed, and the most inflammatory harangues were delivered, on the necessity of striking a decisive blow against the royalist faction. The popular societies in the departments were stimulated to present addresses to the Convention, openly demanding the condemnation of the King. The sections of Paris imitated their example. Petitions were daily heard at the bar of the Assembly, praying for vengeance on the murderers of the 10th August, and for the death of the last tyrant. In the barbarous language of the age, the President had frequently promised satisfaction to the numerous petitioners who prayed, “*De faire rouler la tête du tyran ;*”^{*} and in many proclamations the monarch they were about to try had been already condemned by the Convention.¹

¹ *Journal des Jacobins*, No. 295, 296, 297. *Hist. Parl.* xx. 361, 372. *Lac.* ii. 35. *Mig.* i. 227, 228.

66.
Discovery of the iron closet in the Tuileries.

A discovery was at this juncture made in the Tuileries, which increased to a very high degree the popular discontent against the unfortunate prince. In a cavity in the wall, behind a concealed iron door, were found a great variety of secret papers, belonging to the court, placed there, as already mentioned, by order of Louis. Evidence was there discovered of the measures of Talon, the agreement with Mirabeau, the propositions of Bouillé, and many other secret transactions. Roland had the misfortune, by giving publicity to this discovery, to hasten the death of the sovereign he was desirous of saving. The papers discovered threw a doubt on the consistency of many individuals on the popular side ; but they in no degree implicated Louis in any sinister or unworthy design. They amounted merely to this, that the monarch, severely pressed by his enemies, and deserted by all the world, was desirous of strengthening his party by a junction with some of the popular leaders, or received

^{*} To cause the head of the tyrant to roll on the ground.

and entertained projects of deliverance from the most zealous of his adherents. But no trace was discovered of any intention, on his part, to subvert the constitution he had sworn to maintain, or do more than extricate himself from the tyranny to which, in the pretended days of freedom, he was really subjected by the democratic faction. And is the sovereign to be the only person, in a free country, who is to be denied the privilege of making those efforts in favour of his just rights, which are so zealously asserted for the meanest of his subjects?¹

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¹ Deux
Amis, ix.
144, 147.
Bert. de
Moll. x. 216,
218. Lac.
ii. 33, 34.
Mig. i. 229.
Th. iii. 326,
327.

The charges brought against Louis were very numerous. Among others, he was accused of having written to the Bishop of Clermont, on 16th April 1791, "that if he recovered his power he would restore the clergy and the constitution to their ancient state;" of having entertained designs of betraying his oaths and overturning the Revolution; of having corresponded with the emigrant faction, whose avowed object was the restoration of the ancient order of things. Of all these grounds of complaint, it is sufficient to observe, that in so far as they were founded in fact, they were perfectly justifiable in the circumstances in which he was placed; but that in greater part they were base calumnies, equally contradicted by his virtues and his irresolution; and that, if he had really been actuated by the principles imputed to him, he never would have been reduced to the necessity of vindicating himself before a popular assembly. The preliminary question which occupied the Convention was, Whether Louis could be legally brought to trial before them? The Committee of Twelve, to whom the point was referred for investigation, reported in the affirmative. Mailhé, charged with delivering its report, maintained—"That the inviolability awarded to Louis by the constitution was as *King*, not as an *individual*; that the nation had supplied the inviolability of the sovereign by the responsibility of his ministers; and that, where he had acted as an individual, and not through

67.
Preliminary
point—
Could Louis
be tried?

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them, his protection was at an end ; that his dethronement was not a punishment, but a change of government ; that he was not amenable to the law against traitors and conspirators ; finally, that the arraignment should be before the Convention, and not any inferior court, because, as it embraced all those interests which were centred in the maintenance of justice, it was impossible that that supreme tribunal could violate justice, and therefore needless that it should be fettered by its forms.”¹

¹ Bert. de
Moll. x. 192,
193. Hist.
Parl. xx.
322, 323.
Mig. i. 230.

68.
Stormy dis-
cussion in
the Conven-
tion.
3d Dec.

When this report was received in the Convention, a stormy discussion arose. The partisans of Louis, though obliged to profess themselves satisfied of his guilt, maintained “that the inviolability was general ; that the constitution had not only provided for secret hostilities on his part, but open warfare, and in either alternative, had prescribed no other pain than dethronement ; that the nation had placed him on the throne on these conditions ; that the Convention was commissioned by the nation to change the government, but not to judge the sovereign ; that if the rules of justice forbade his prosecution, much more did the usages of war, which permitted no severity to the vanquished except on the field of battle ; that the Republic had no interest in his condemnation, but only in such measures as were called for by the public safety, which would be sufficiently secured by his detention or exile.” There were not wanting, however, some deputies who courageously supported a more humane opinion. “What,” said Rauzet, “was the true position given to the King by the constitution of 1791 ? He was placed in presence of the national representation as a rival to it. Was it not natural that he should seek to recover as much as possible his lost authority ? Did not you yourselves call him to enter upon that strife with the legislative body ? In that contest he was overthrown, and he lies now alone and bound at the feet of twenty-five millions of men, and shall they have the baseness to murder the vanquished ? Has not Louis repressed, beyond any other man, the eternal

desire for power which is so strongly impressed on the human heart? Did he not, in 1789, voluntarily abandon a large part of his authority? Has he not abolished servitude in his domains, admitted philosophers into his councils, and even the empirics imposed upon him by the public voice? Does not France owe to him the convocation of the States-general, and the first establishment of its political rights?" The Girondists supported this opinion; the neutral party was inclined to adhere to the report of the committee.¹

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VIII.

1792.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxi. 150,
161. Moni-
teur, Nov.
13. Mig. i.
231. Th. iii.
295, 298,
305.

But the Jacobins openly avowed a more manly doctrine, if such an epithet can be fitly applied to severity towards a fallen enemy. "Citizens," said St Just, "I undertake to prove that the opinions advanced on both sides are equally erroneous. The committee who have reported, you yourselves, our adversaries, seek for forms to authorise the trial of the late King—I, on the contrary, affirm that the King is to be regarded more as an enemy whom we have to combat, than as a criminal whom we are to judge; the forms to be observed are not those of private prosecutions, but of public conflicts. Hesitation, delay, in such a case, are the greatest acts of imprudence. After postponing the formation of laws, no calamity could be so great as that of temporising with a dethroned monarch. The mere act of having reigned is a crime, a usurpation which nothing can absolve, which a people are culpable for having suffered, and which invests every man with a personal right of vengeance. No one can reign innocently: the very idea of such a thing is ridiculous. We must treat such a usurpation as kings themselves have treated all attempts to dethrone them. Was not the memory of Cromwell arraigned for having overturned the authority of Charles? Yet, in truth, the one was not more a usurper than the other; for when a people is sufficiently base to allow itself to be ruled by a tyrant, power belongs of right to the first person who can seize it, and is not more legitimate when held by one than by the other. The time will come when the world will be

69.
Speech of St
Just on the
subject.

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

astonished that, in the eighteenth century, we should have been so much behind the days of Cæsar : that tyrant was slain in a crowded senate, without any other formality than three-and-twenty strokes of a poniard, and no other warrant than the liberty of Rome. And now you hesitate to engage in the trial of a man, the assassin of the people, arrested in the very commission of his crimes. The men who are charged with the judgment of Louis have a republic to form : those who scruple at inflicting a just punishment on a king, will never succeed in establishing one. If the Roman people, after six hundred years of hatred of tyrants—if England, after the death of Cromwell—saw the race of sovereigns revive in its bosom, what have all to fear among ourselves who see the axe tremble in the hands of those who have only just begun to wield it, and the people, in the first days of their liberty, awed by the recollection of their former fetters ?”¹

¹ Hist. Parl. xx. 329, 331. Moniteur, 14th Nov. Mig. i. 232. Th. iii. 300, 303.

70.
Robespierre's arguments.

Robespierre strongly supported these arguments. “Consider,” said he, “what audacity the enemies of liberty have already acquired. In August last they sought concealment ; now they boldly show themselves, and demand impunity for a perjured tyrant. We have heard of his virtues and benefactions. While we have the utmost difficulty in rescuing the best citizens from a precipitate accusation, the cause of the despot alone is so sacred that it cannot be too fully or patiently discussed. If we are to believe his apologists, his trial will last several months ; it will be protracted till next spring, when the despots will execute a general attack for his rescue. What a career is thus opened to the conspirators ! what room afforded for intrigues of the aristocracy ! The Assembly has been unconsciously led from the true question before it. There is in reality no criminal process ; Louis is not an accused party ; you are not judges ; you are, and can be, only statesmen ; you have not a verdict to pronounce for or against any individual, but a measure of public importance to adopt, an act essential to national existence to

perform. A dethroned king in a republic is fit for nothing but one of two objects—either to trouble the public tranquillity and endanger the freedom of the state, or to confirm the one and the other. The punishment of death is in general an evil, for this plain reason, that, by the unchangeable laws of nature, it can only be justified by absolute necessity with regard to individuals or to the social body ; and in ordinary cases it can never be necessary, because the government has ample means of preventing the guilty person from injuring his fellow-citizens. But a dethroned king in the midst of an ill-cemented republic—a king whose name alone is sufficient to rekindle the flames of civil war—can never be an object of indifference to the public safety ; and that cruel exception from ordinary rules is owing to nothing but the nature of his crimes. I pronounce with regret the fatal truth ; Louis must die, that France may live. Louis was once a king ; he is now dethroned : the momentous question before you is decided by these simple considerations. Louis cannot be tried ; his trial is over, his condemnation recorded, or the formation of the republic is unjustifiable. I demand that the Convention shall declare the King traitor towards France, criminal towards human nature, and instantly condemn him in virtue of the right of insurrection.”¹

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxi. 162,
163. Moni-
teur, Dec. 4.
Mig. i. 232,
233. Th.
iii. 300, 303,
321, 322.

By these extreme propositions, which they did not expect to carry, the Jacobins in a manner insured the condemnation of Louis. When such doctrines were once abroad, the moderate party had no chance of success with the multitude, but in adopting measures of inferior severity. To have contended for an absolute exemption from punishment, would have appeared tantamount to abandoning the whole principles of the Revolution. Every man felt that he could not do so without endangering his own safety, and exposing himself to the imminent hazard of shortly changing places with his dethroned sovereign.² Actuated by these motives, the majority of the Conven-

71.
Majority de-
termine he
may be tried.

Dec. 3.
² Hist. Parl.
xxi. 173.
Moniteur,
4th Dec.
Mig. i. 233.
Lac. ii. 30,
34.

CHAP.
VIII.

1792.

tion, composed of the Girondists and neutral party, decided that the King should be put on his trial before it.

72.
Description
of the
Temple.

The prison of the Temple, which has been rendered immortal by the last imprisonment of Louis XVI. and his family, no longer exists. It was situated in the Rue du Temple, in the heart of Paris, and consisted of two towers enclosed within a high exterior wall, and placed adjoining each other. They were called the little and the great towers. In the former, the whole royal family were first immured ; to the last the King alone was subsequently removed, when he was separated from his wife and children. The little tower consisted of a small square, flanked with turrets, consisting of four stories. In the first were a small library, parlour, and guard-room ; in the second was the bedroom of the King and Queen, in which the Dauphin also slept. The Princess Elizabeth and Princess-Royal were lodged in an adjoining apartment, entering from the former. During the day, the royal family sat in a large room in the third story, adjoining which was a little one in the turret, where the King's books were kept : and in a room entering from it, Cléry and Hue, the faithful attendants of the fallen sovereign, slept. On the right of the towers, enclosed within high walls, was a small garden, in which the royal family were permitted to walk. It had no flowers or shrubs to give variety to the scene : a few plots of withered grass, and three stunted bushes of arbutus, rendered half leafless by the winds of autumn, constituted the only ornaments of the gloomy enclosure. Such was the last abode of those to whom the splendour of Versailles once seemed scarcely a fitting habitation.¹

Cléry, 117.

73.
Conduct of
the royal
family dur-
ing their
captivity.

Since his imprisonment in the Temple, the unfortunate monarch had been successively curtailed of his comforts, and the severity of his detention increased. At first the royal family were permitted to spend their time together : and, disengaged from the cares of government, they expe-

rienced the sweetness of domestic affection and parental tenderness. Attended by their faithful servants, Cléry and afterwards Hue, the King spent his time in teaching the Dauphin the elements of education, the Queen in discharging with the princesses the most humble duties ; or, like Mary in Lochleven castle, in large works of tapestry. The royal party breakfasted at nine in the apartment of the Queen ; at one, if the day was fair, they walked for an hour in the garden, strictly watched by the officers of the municipality, from whom they often experienced cruel insults. Their son evinced the most engaging sweetness of disposition, as well as aptitude for study : bred up in the school of adversity, he promised to grace the throne by the virtues and energy of a humble station. The Princess-Royal, in the intervals of instruction, played with her brother, and softened, by every possible attention, the severity of her parents' captivity ; while the Princess Elizabeth bore the horrors of her prison with the same celestial equanimity with which she had formerly withstood the seductions and corruptions of a dissipated court. The virtues and graces of the Queen won the heart and vanquished the fanaticism of one of the guards, placed over the royal family by the Convention, named Toulan. He was a native of Toulouse, and inherited the warmth and ardour of a southern imagination. To such a disposition the transition was easy—from the enthusiasm of liberty to that of love. Like George Douglas at Lochleven, he devoted himself in secret to the rescue of the royal captives, and engaged one of his colleagues, named Lepitre, in the attempt. The secret countersign given to Toulan by the Queen was the words,—“ He who fears to die, knows not how to love.” But though several persons in Paris, and even in the national guard, were engaged in the attempt, the generous design failed, from the frequent change of guards, which the Commissioners' jealousy had ordered.¹

¹ Bert. de Moll. x. 107. Lac. x. 133, 135. Cléry, 40, 43. Th. iii. 228, 230, 262. Lam. Hist. des Gir. iv. 336.

The long evenings of winter were chiefly spent in

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74.

Occupations
of the royal
family in the
Temple.

reading aloud. Racine and Corneille, or historical compositions, were the favourite study of the royal family.* The King perused, again and again, the history of the English Rebellion by Hume, and sought, by reflections on the fate of Charles, to prepare his mind for the catastrophe which he was well aware awaited himself. His firmness seemed to increase with the approach of danger ; the irresolution and timidity, by which he was formerly distinguished, totally disappeared when his subjects' fate was not bound up with his own. The Queen herself took an example from his resolution. After dinner, the King and his family slept peaceably for a short time—a touching spectacle, standing as they did on the verge of eternity. At night the Queen undressed the Dauphin, and put him to bed with her own hands. He said his prayers to his mother ; he petitioned for his parents' life, and for the Princess Lamballe, with whose death he was unacquainted, and for his instructress, the Marquise de Tourzel. After they had been some time in the Temple, the Queen taught her son another prayer, which she whispered in his ear as she stooped down to kiss him when lying in his bed before retiring to rest. The prayer has been preserved by the Duchess d'Angoulême, and was as follows :—"All-powerful God, who hath created and redeemed me, I love you ; preserve my father and mother, and our family. Defend us against our enemies. Give to my mother, my aunt, my sister, strength to endure their trials."¹ When the Commissioners of the Commune were near, he took the precaution, of his own accord, to utter the last supplications in an inaudible voice. The members of the municipality, who alternately visited the royal family during their captivity, at times displayed the most insolent barbarity, at others a delicate forbearance.² Louis conversed with his inspectors on every occasion, and in the most familiar manner, on the subject of their different trades,

¹ Lam. Hist. des Gir. iv. 320.

² Clery, 52, 53, 56, 59, Th. iii. 262, 263. Lac. x. 133, 142. Th. iii. 261.

* They afterwards occupied the winter evenings of Napoleon at St Helena.
—LAS CASES and O'MEARA.

and frequently surprised them by the extent and accuracy of his practical information. "Are you not afraid," said he to a mason, Mizareau, "that these pillars will give way?"—"They stand firmer than the throne of kings," was the reply of the hard-hearted republican.

By degrees, however, the precautions of the municipality became more vexatious. Their officers never for an instant lost sight of the royal family; and when they retired to rest, a bed was placed at the door of each room, where the guards slept. They seemed to take a savage pleasure in all acts which might shock the royal captives, and remind them of their fallen condition.* Santerre, with his brutal staff, every day made them a visit; and a permanent council of civic authorities was held in the lower apartments of the prison. Writing materials were first taken away: soon after, the knives, scissors, needles, and bodkins of the princesses were seized, after the most rigorous search; a cruel deprivation, as it not only prevented them from relieving the tedious hours by needlework, but rendered it impossible for them any longer to mend their garments. Rigorously excluded from all communication with the city, it was with the utmost difficulty that they could receive any intelligence as to the events which were going on there. But the ingenuity of the faithful Cléry discovered a method, to a certain degree, of satisfying their desires in this particular, by means of a public crier, with whom he opened a communication, and who placed himself under the windows of the King, and, under pretence of selling the journals, recounted their leading articles with as loud a voice as he could.¹ Cléry at the appointed hour placed himself at the window, and eagerly listened to the details, which in the evening, after

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75.

Increasing
severity of
the republic-
an authori-
ties.¹ Cléry, 62,
79. Th. iii.
264, 266.

* "Rocher (c'était le geolier) chantait devant nous la Carmagnole et d'autres horreurs: sachant que ma mère craignait l'odeur de la pipe, il lui en soufflait, ainsi qu'à mon père, une bouffée quand ils passaient. Il était toujours couché quand nous allions souper; quelquefois même il était dans son lit quand nous allions dîner."—*Journal de Temple, par Madame la DUCHESSE D'ANGOULEME*, 43, 44.

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76.

They are
separated
from each
other.
29th Sept.

the King had retired to bed, he told him in a whisper, without the city officers being aware of the communication.

But before long the magistrates of Paris envied the royal captives the simple consolation which they derived from sharing their misfortunes together. By a resolution of the municipality, on 29th September, it was determined that the King and the Dauphin should be separated from the Queen and the princesses. This decree, as unnecessary as it was barbarous, rent the hearts of the whole family. With anxious eyes they gazed in the faces of the municipal officers, to gather the object of this separation from the King, which they feared was his death. Their grief was so poignant that it even melted the hearts of the commissioners of the magistracy, who left the room that they might escape its influence. Cléry, the King's valet, who accompanied Louis to the large tower, where he was to be confined, was not even allowed to see the Dauphin, or assist him in dressing; and the King was not permitted for some time to behold his family at all. The allowance of food brought to Louis in his seclusion, was barely adequate to the sustenance of a human being. One morning, the piece of bread presented for his breakfast, and that of Cléry, was so palpably insufficient, that the latter refused to share it. The monarch insisted, and they eat together in silence and in tears their humble allotment. Shortly after, the sorrow of the royal family received some relief by their being permitted to dine together; their joy at meeting was so excessive, that even their stern jailers were moved to tears. The Queen, during their whole captivity, performed the duties of a common menial servant in the rooms; this, at all times a source of regret to the King, was especially so on the anniversary of their marriage, and the birth of their children or other joyous events. On one of these occasions he recalled to her recollection the days of their happiness, and asked her pardon for having implicated

her in the fate of one who had so changed them into mourning. "Ah! Madam!" said he one evening, on seeing Marie-Antoinette engaged in one of these humble pursuits, "what an employment for a Queen of France! Could they see it at Vienna! Who could have foreseen that, in uniting your lot to mine, you would have descended so low!"—"And do you esteem it as nothing," replied the Queen with inexpressible dignity, "the glory of being the wife of the best and the most persecuted of men? Are not such misfortunes the noblest honours?"¹

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¹ Lac. x.
140, 142.
Cléry, 69.
Bert. de
Moll. x. 107.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. iv.
303, 328.

On the day on which it had been determined that Louis should appear at the bar of the Convention, he was engaged teaching the Dauphin his lesson, when the commissioners entered, and informed the King that they were ordered to take the young Prince to his mother. He tenderly embraced his son, and was profoundly afflicted at the separation. At one the Mayor of Paris, Chambon, entered, and read the decree, by which it was ordained that Louis Capet should attend at the bar of the Convention. "Capet is not my name," he replied, "but that of one of my ancestors. I could have wished, gentlemen, that you had left my son with me during the last two hours; but that deprivation is a part of the treatment which I have experienced ever since my confinement. I am ready to follow you, not because I recognise the authority of the Convention, but because they have the power to compel me." When Madame Elizabeth was informed of the measures adopted in regard to the King, she expressed herself fully prepared for the catastrophe which followed. "The Queen and I," she said, "are prepared for the worst: we do not attempt to shut our eyes to his approaching fate—he will die the victim of his love for the people, for whose happiness he has never ceased to labour since his accession to the throne. How cruelly the country has been deceived!"² The religion of the King, his firm reliance on Providence, can support him in that cruel

77.
Conduct of
the royal
family when
told of
Louis's
trial.
Dec. 11.

² Cléry, 117,
120. Th.
iii. 329.
Lac. x. 171.
Deux Amis,
ix. 226, 229.

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extremity. Cléry, you will be left alone with my brother ; redouble your attentions to him ; we have now none to depend on but you."

78.
The King
brought to
the bar of
the Conven-
tion.
Dec. 11.

The crowd was immense as the King passed through the streets. Amidst a thousand revolutionary cries, some countenances indicated the most profound grief. His own appearance differed in no respect from what it had been when he passed, in the days of his prosperity, from one palace to another. Six hundred infantry, and a large body of cavalry, with three pieces of loaded cannon, preceded and followed the carriage. The Convention, warned of the approach of the King, earnestly recommended tranquillity when he entered. "Representatives," said Barère, the president, "you are about to exercise the right of national justice. You will answer to all the citizens of France for your conduct. Europe observes you : history will collect your thoughts—your actions ; incorruptible posterity will judge you with inflexible severity. Let your attitude suit the dignity of your situation. Give, by your organs, a great lesson to kings—an example useful to the emancipation of nations. Remember the terrible silence which attended his appearance from Varennes—silence prophetic of the judgment of kings by nations." Louis appeared. The President, Barère, immediately said, with a faltering voice,—“ Louis, the French nation accuses you : you are about to hear the charges that are to be preferred : Louis, be seated.” The King sat down with an intrepid air : no signs of emotion appeared on his countenance. The dignity and mildness of his presence were such that the Girondists were melted to tears ; and the fanaticism of St Just, Robespierre, and Marat, for a moment yielded to the feelings of humanity.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxi. 236,
237. Deux
Amis, ix.
229, 230.
Lac. x. 175,
176. Mig.
i. 235. Th.
iii. 329, 331.

79.
Charges
against him.

The charges consisted of an enumeration of the whole crimes of the Revolution, from its commencement in 1789, all of which were laid to his account. They were, according to the custom in French courts, read to him by the clerk, and he was required to answer each charge separately.

His answers, by the admission even of his enemies, were brief and firm : he displayed a remarkable degree of presence of mind ; and in most cases was victorious over his adversaries, or touched them by the simplicity of his replies. The affair of Nancy, the journey to Varennes, the suppression of the revolt in the Champ de Mars, were justified by the decrees of the Assembly ; the catastrophe of the 10th August, by the power of self-defence conferred on him by the laws. To every question of the president he replied with clearness and precision ; denying some of the alleged crimes, showing that others were the work of his ministers, justifying all by the powers conferred on him by the Constitution. When charged with shedding the blood of the people on the 10th August, he, for the first and last time, exclaimed with a loud voice—"No, sir, it was not I that did it." He was careful, in his answers, never to implicate any members of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies : many who then sat as his judges trembled lest he should betray them. The Jacobins beheld, with dismay, the profound impression made on the Convention by the simple statement of truth, by the firm but temperate demeanour of the sovereign. The most violent of the party proposed that he should be hung that very night ; a laugh as of demons followed the proposal from the benches of the Mountain. But the majority, composed of the Girondists and the neutrals, decided that he should be formally tried, and defended by counsel.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl. xxi. 287, 302. Deux Amis, ix. 231, 253. Bert. de Moll. x. 270. Lac. x. 177, 178. Mig. i. 235, 236. Th. iii. 383.

When Louis returned to the Temple, the cruel resolution of the Commune was communicated to him, that he was no longer to be permitted to see his family. "My son, at least !" he exclaimed with the most heart-rending accent—"am I never again to see my son ? What needless cruelty to deprive me of that sweet infant !" * At half-past

80.
His return to the Temple.

* "Si visurus eum vivo, et venturus in unum ;
Vitam oro ; patiar quemvis durare laborem.
Sin aliquem infandum casum, Fortuna, minaris ;

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eight, the hour when the Dauphin usually went to bed, he earnestly entreated that he might see him for a moment to give him his blessing ; but even this favour was refused by the relentless municipality. For some time after, he was in the deepest distress ; but he soon recovered his composure—read for two hours a work on religion—and never again lost his serenity of mind. The Convention, less barbarous than the magistrates, the day after, at the petition of the King, decreed that he might enjoy the society of his children, provided they did not return to the Queen during his trial. “ You need not give yourself the trouble to pass such a decree,” said the Jacobins, “ for unless the municipality choose, they will not carry it into execution.” The King, thinking the children more necessary to the Queen’s comfort than his own, declined to take them from her, and submitted to the painful separation with a resignation which nothing could overcome.¹

¹ Bert de Moll. x. 272, 273. Deux Amis, ix. 254. Th. iii. 336. Lac. x. 180. Cléry, 124.

81.
Generous devotion of Malesherbes and Tronchet.

On the following day the deputies of the Convention announced to him that he was to be permitted to choose his counsel. He selected M. Tronchet and M. Target.* The first accepted, and faithfully discharged his duty : the latter had the baseness to decline.† The venerable Malesherbes, whose official career had been distinguished by so many sage and useful reforms, now came forward, and volunteered his services on behalf of his sovereign. In a

Nunc, ô, nunc liceat crudellem abrumperè vitam ;
Dum curæ ambigue, dum spes incerta futuri,
Dum te, care puer ! mea sera et sola voluptas,
Complexu teneo ; gravius ne nuncius aures
Vulneret.” *Æneid*, viii. 576.

* On the same day, the municipality passed a decree directing, “ Que les conseillers de Louis XVI. seraient scrupuleusement fouillés jusqu’aux endroits les plus secrets, et qu’après s’être déshabillés ils se revêtiraient de nouveaux habits sous la surveillance des commissaires, qu’ils ne pourraient renvoyer de la tour qu’après le jugement du Roi.” BERRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, x. 276, 277.

† Napoleon knew how to admire heroism, even when exerted in another cause ; one of his first acts was to promote Tronchet, then an old man, to the important duty of aiding in the formation of the legal code which has given such durable lustre to the name of its author ; and he was soon after appointed to the head of the Supreme Court or Cassation. BOURRIEN XI., iv. 68, and v. 122.

letter addressed to the president of the Convention, he said—"I have been twice honoured with a place in the councils of my master, when it was the object of ambition to all the world; I owe him the same service, when it imposes a duty which many consider dangerous." This generous offer drew tears from the eyes of many in the Convention: the Jacobins were silent: even reckless ambition, for a moment, felt the ascendant of heroic virtue. Louis was deeply affected at this proof of devotion on the part of his aged friend. When he entered the Temple, he clasped him in his arms, and exclaimed, with tears in his eyes—"Ah! it is you, my friend! You see to what I am reduced by the excess of my affection for my people, and the self-denial which led me to remove the troops intended to protect the throne from the enterprises of the factious. You fear not to endanger your own life to save mine; but it is in vain. They will bring me to the scaffold, I am well aware; but that is of no moment. Let us enter upon the defence as if I were sure to be successful: I will gain it in reality through your exertions, since my memory will descend unspotted to posterity."¹*

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1792.

¹ Deux
Amis, ix.
257, 258.
Bert. de
Moll. x. 279.
Hue, 42.
Lac. x. 186,
193. Mig. i.
236, 237.

Malesherbes and Tronchet afterwards called in the assistance of M. de Sèze, a celebrated pleader, who at first had espoused the popular side, but had withdrawn from political life since the sombre days of the Revolution commenced. He entered with great earnestness, and his wonted ability, upon his arduous duties. "I have often wished," said the King to Malesherbes, "that I had the means of recompensing the zeal of your colleagues: I have thought of leaving them a legacy; but would it be respected by the Convention? Would it not endanger

82.
De Sèze is
called in,
and his
eloquent
peroration
struck out
by Louis.

* How identical is heroic virtue in all ages: how well have the poets prefigured its most noble efforts! -

"Je serai du parti qu'attigera le sort.

Egale à tous les deux jusques à la victoire,

Je prendrai part aux maux sans en prendre la gloire;

Et je garde au milieu de tant d'après rigoureux,

Mes larmes aux vaincus, et ma haine aux vainqueurs."

CORNEILLE, *Les Horaces*, Act i. scene 1.

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1792.

them ?"—“Sire,” replied Malesherbes, “the legacy is already bequeathed : in choosing them for your defenders, your Majesty has immortalised their names.” His counsel were in continual astonishment at his serenity of mind. “Believe me,” said he, “religion has more consolation than philosophy.” When the eloquent peroration of de Sèze was read to the King the evening before it was to be delivered to the Assembly, he requested that it might be struck out. “I have to request of you,” said he, “to make a sacrifice, which I know will be painful ; strike out of your pleading the too touching peroration. It is enough for me to appear before such judges, and demonstrate my complete innocence ; but I will not condescend to move their feelings.” The same day he composed his immortal testament ; the most perfect commentary on the principles of Christianity that ever has come from the hand of a King.* “I recommend to my son,” said he, in that touching memorial, “if he ever has the misfortune to become king, to feel that his whole existence should be devoted to the good of his people ; to bury in oblivion all hatred and resentment, especially for my misfortunes ; to recollect that he cannot promote the happiness of his subjects but in reigning according to the laws ; but, at the same time, that a king cannot carry into execution his good intentions without the requisite authority : that, otherwise, being continually thwarted in his operations, he rather injures than benefits. I pardon all those who have injured me in my misfortunes ; and I pray my son to recollect only their sufferings. I declare before God, and on the eve of appearing at His tribunal, that I am totally innocent of the crimes laid to my charge.”¹

¹ Hue, 72.
Cléry, 143.
Lac. x. 195,
197. Th.
iii. 349.

83.
The King is
brought to
trial.
Dec. 26.

On the 26th December the King was conducted to the Convention. He was taken in the carriage of the mayor, with the same military force as before. He evinced, in passing through the city, as great coolness as on the former occasion : spoke of Seneca, Livy, and the public

* See Appendix, A. chap. viii.

hospitals ; and addressed himself in a delicate vein of pleasantry to one of the municipality, who sat in the carriage with his hat on. When waiting in the antechamber, Malesherbes, in conversing with the King, made use of the words, "Sire, your Majesty." Treillard, a furious Jacobin, interrupted him, exclaiming—"What has rendered you so bold as to pronounce these words, which the Convention has proscribed?" "Contempt of life," replied the intrepid old man. When they were admitted into the Assembly, Louis seated himself between his counsel, surveyed with a benignant eye the crowded benches of his adversaries, and was even observed sometimes to smile as he conversed with Malesherbes. In the speech which followed, de Sèze ably argued the inviolability of the sovereign, and proved that, if it was destroyed, the weaker party in the Convention had no security against the stronger ; a prophetic truth, which the Girondists soon experienced at the hands of their implacable enemies. He examined the whole life of the King, and showed that, in every instance, he had been actuated by the sincerest love of his people.¹

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VIII.

1792.

¹ Bert. de
Moll. x. 300,
301. Lac.
x. 199.
Th. iii. 349.

"On the 10th August," he observed, "was the monarch under the necessity of submitting to an armed multitude ? Was he constrained by law to yield to force ? Was not the power which he held in the constitution a deposit, for the preservation of which he was answerable to the nation ? If you yourselves were surrounded by a furious and misguided rabble, which threatened, without respect for your sacred character, to tear you from this sanctuary, what could you do other than what he has done ? The magistrates themselves authorised all that he did, by having signed the order to repel force by force. Notwithstanding their sanction, the King was unwilling to make use of this authority, and retired into the bosom of the Assembly, to avoid the shedding of blood. The combat which followed was undertaken neither for him nor by his orders ; he interfered only to

84.
Splendid
peroration
of de Sèze.

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VIII.

1792.

put a stop to it, as is proved by the fact, that it was in consequence of an order signed by him that the Swiss abandoned the defence of the chateau, and surrendered their lives. There is a crying injustice, therefore, in reproaching him with the blood shed on the 10th August ; in truth, his conduct in that particular is above reproach." His conclusion was in these words :—" Louis mounted the throne at the age of twenty ; and even then he set the example of an irreproachable life ; he was governed by no weak or corrupted passion ; he was economical, just, and severe. He proved himself, from the beginning, the friend of his country. The people desired the removal of a destructive tax ; he removed it : they wished the abolition of servitude ; he abolished it in his domains : they prayed for a reform in the criminal law ; he reformed it : they demanded that thousands of Frenchmen, whom the rigour of our usages had excluded from political rights, should enjoy them ; he conceded them : they longed for liberty ; he gave it. He even anticipated their wishes ; and yet it is the same people who now demand his punishment. I add no more : I pause before the tribunal of history : remember that it will judge your decision, and that its decision will be the voice of ages."¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxii. 56, 57.
Mig. i. 237.
Lac. x. 208.
Th. iii. 349,
352.

85.
The King's
concluding
words.

When the defence was concluded, the King rose and spoke as follows :—" You have heard my defence ; I will not recapitulate it : when addressing you, probably for the last time, I declare that my conscience has nothing to reproach itself with, and that my defenders have said nothing but the truth. I have no fears for the public examination of my conduct ; but my heart bleeds at the accusation brought against me, of having been the cause of the misfortunes of my people, and, most of all, of having shed their blood on the 10th of August. The multiplied proofs I have given, in every period of my reign, of my love for my people, and the manner in which I have conducted myself towards them, might, I had hoped, have saved me from so cruel an imputation."² Having said

² Hist. Parl.
xxii. 57, 58.
Lac. x. 210.
Th. iii. 353.

these words, he withdrew with his defenders. He embraced de Sèze, and exclaimed in a transport of gratitude—"This is true eloquence: I am now at ease; I shall have an honoured memory: the French will regret my death."

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A stormy discussion immediately arose in the Assembly. Lanjuinais had the boldness to demand a revocation of the decree by which the King had been brought to the bar of the Convention. "If you insist on being judges," he concluded, "cease to be accusers. My blood boils at the thought of seeing in the judgment-seat men who openly conspired against the throne on the 10th of August, and who have in such ferocious terms anticipated the judgment without hearing the defence." The most violent agitation followed these words. "He accuses," exclaimed the Jacobins, "the 10th August in the midst of the Convention, which owes its existence to that revolt! He wishes to save the tyrant; to-morrow he will deliver us up to his vengeance. To the Abbaye with the perjured deputy! Let the friends of the tyrant perish with him." The Girondists felt the force of this reply. They did not venture to call in question an event which had established the Republic, and could not be arraigned without consigning their power to the dust, themselves to the scaffold. Duhesme exclaimed, from the benches of the Mountain—"I demand that he be instantly judged: all the forms have been gone through: it will be time enough to print his defence after his execution." A vehement debate, interrupted constantly with cries of fury, took place, which was at length appeased by a proposal of Couthon to discuss the proposition made of an appeal to the people. This discussion took place, and lasted twenty days.¹

86.
Debate on
the accusa-
tion.

¹ Deux
Amis, ix.
276, 280.
Hist. Parl.
xxii. 61, 81.
Lac. x. 213.
Th. iii. 355.

St Just was the most powerful declaimer against the sovereign. "Posterity," he said, "will bless your work: every generous heart throughout the world will respect your courage. What people has ever made such sacrifices for liberty? What people has been so often betrayed?

87.
St Just's
argument
against an
appeal to
the people.

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1792.

what so slow in vengeance? Is it before the prince that we must justify our proceedings, and is that prince to be inviolable? The system of the King was apparent gentleness and goodness: everywhere he identified himself with his country, and sought to fix on himself the affections which should be centred on her. He sapped the laws by the refinement of his conduct—by the interest which unfortunate virtue inspires. Louis was truly a tyrant, and a perfidious and deceitful one. He convoked the States-general; but it was only to humble the noblesse, and reign absolute through their divisions. On the 14th July, and the 5th October, he had secretly provided the means of resistance; but when the national energy had shattered them in pieces, he made a virtue of necessity, and testified a hypocritical joy for the victory of the people. Since that time, being no longer able to employ force, he has never ceased to strive to corrupt the friends of the people; he employed the most perfidious dissimulation before the 10th August, and now assumes a feigned gentleness to disarm your resentment. He then filled the palace with soldiers and assassins, and came to the Assembly with peace and conciliation on his lips. It is in vain to talk of an appeal to the people: it would be an appeal only to anarchy. The Revolution does not in reality commence till the tyrant is no more. The French long loved the King who was preparing their slavery: he has since slain those who held him foremost in their affections. The people will no more revolt if the King is just, than the sea will rise if it is not agitated by the winds.”¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxii. 32, 33.
Lac. x. 215.
218. Th.
iii. 356.

83.
Speech of
Robes-
pierre.

Robespierre said—“There are sacred forms, unknown to the bar: there are indestructible principles, superior to the common maxims, concentrated by habit, or confirmed by prejudice. The true condemnation of a sovereign is to be found in the spontaneous insurrection of a people driven to desperation by his oppression; it is the most sure and the most equitable of all judgments. Louis

was condemned long before the decree which called him to your bar. The last and greatest proof which freemen can give of their love to their country, is to sacrifice to it the first movements of returning sensibility. The humanity which trembles in presence of the accused, the clemency which compounds with tyranny, is the worst kind of oppression. What motive can there be for delay? The defence of the accused has terminated—why should we not give judgment? Do you doubt of his guilt? If so, you doubt of the sacred right of insurrection: you throw an imputation on the whole Revolution: you transfer the accusation of the King into an indictment against the whole French nation. It is a mere pretext to talk of an appeal to the people. Have the people heard the evidence? Are they qualified to give judgment? The people have energy, they have courage; but they are often the dupe of scoundrels: they strike down tyrants; but they often yield to hypocrites. The majority of the nation!—Why, virtue has ever been in a minority on the earth. But for that, would it have been peopled by tyrants and slaves? Hampden and Sidney were in the minority, for they expired on the scaffold: Cato was in the minority, for he tore out his entrails: Socrates was in the minority, for he swallowed poison. The motion to submit the question to an appeal to the people, is nothing but an effort to arrest the cause of justice, and instead of the solemn judgment of the national representatives, induce the distractions and horrors of a civil war.”¹

Vergniaud replied in a strain of impassioned eloquence. A profound silence prevailed when he arose; the members listened with breathless anxiety to the first orator of France, pleading the cause of its first subject. “We are accused of provoking a civil war; the accusation is false. But what do they desire, who incessantly preach up assassination against the partisans of tyranny, and apply that name to all those who thwart their ambitious projects; who invoke poniards against the representatives of

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxii. 104,
105. Moni-
teur, Dec.
29, 1792.

89.
Vergniaud's
reply.

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the people ; who are never satisfied, unless the minority of the legislature rules the majority, and enforces its arguments by the aid of insurrections ? They are the real promoters of civil war, who thunder forth these principles in all the public places, and pervert the people, by stigmatising justice with the name of pusillanimity, humanity with that of conspiracy. Who has not heard in the streets the exclamations of the rabble, who ascribe every calamity to the influence of the sovereign ? If bread is dear, the cause is in the Temple ; if money is scarce, if the armies are ill-paid, the cause is in the Temple ; if we are daily obliged to witness misery in the streets, the cause is in the Temple. Who will assure me, that those men who are so ready in exciting such complaints, will not hereafter direct them against the Convention ? and those who assert that the tyranny of the legislature had succeeded to that of the throne, and that a new 10th of August is necessary to extinguish it ; that a defender is required for the Republic, and that one chief alone can save it—who will assure me that these same men will not exclaim, after the death of Louis, with still greater violence than before, If bread is dear, the cause is in the Convention ; if money is scarce, if our armies are ill-provisioned, the cause is in the Convention ; if the machine of government is overcharged, the cause is in the Convention ; if the calamities of war have been increased by the accession of England and Spain to the league of our enemies, the cause is in the Convention, which provoked their hostility by the condemnation of Louis ? Who will assure me, that among the assassins of September 2d, there will not be found what you now call a *defender*, but who, in reality, will prove a dictator, yet reeking with the blood of his victims ; and if so, to what unheard-of calamities will Paris be subjected ? Who will inhabit a city tenanted only by desolation and death ? And when the industrious citizens shall be reduced to beggary, who will then relieve their wants ?¹ who will succour

¹ Hist. Parl. xxii. 137, 154. Moniteur, Dec. 31, 1792. Lac. x. 231, 232. Th. iii. 369, 373. Mig. i. 239. Toul. iii. 178.

their famishing children? I foresee the thrilling reply which will meet them :—‘Go to the quarries, and snatch from the earth the bleeding remains of the victims we have murdered. You have asked for blood in the days of your power : here are blood and corpses ; we have no other food now to offer you.’ You shudder at the thought : oh ! then unite your efforts with mine to avert so deplorable a catastrophe.”

At the conclusion of the debate, the Assembly *unanimously* pronounced that Louis was guilty.* The appeal to the people was rejected by a majority of 423 to 281.

“Falsa è l'accusa ; ognuno lo sa ; ma ognuno
Per se tremantè, tacendo l'afferma.” †

The question remained, what punishment should be inflicted on the accused ? The vote lasted forty hours. During its continuance, Paris was in the last degree of agitation ; the club of the Jacobins re-echoed with cries for his death ; the avenues of the Convention were choked with a furious multitude, menacing alike his supporters and the neutral party. Deputations innumerable from the sections, from the national guard, from the municipality, from the citizens, succeeded each other at the bar of the Assembly. The sittings of the Jacobin Club were permanent ; night and day menacing speeches were poured forth in that awful den of guilt. Every effort that vehemence, faction, revenge, and terror combined could make, was incessantly put in practice to secure his condemnation. As the termination of the vote drew near, the tumult increased ; a dense crowd in every direction surrounded the hall of the Convention ; the most breath-

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VIII.

1793.

90.

Louis is
condemned,
contrary to
the secret
opinion of
the great
majority of
the Assem-
bly.
Jan. 15,
1793.

* Eight members were absent from bad health ; thirty-seven declared Louis guilty, but voted only for precautionary measures ; 683 declared him guilty. Not one Frenchman deemed it safe to assert the truth, that the illustrious accused was entirely innocent.—See THIERS, iii. 377.

† “The accusation is false : all know it ; but all,
Trembling for themselves, by silence affirm it.”

ALFIERI, *Filippo*.

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VIII.

1793.

less anxiety pervaded the Assembly ; and at length the President, Vergniaud, announced the result in these words :—"Citizens, I announce the result of the vote : when justice has spoken, humanity should resume its place : there are 721 votes ; a majority of twenty-six have voted for death. In the name of the Convention, I declare that the punishment of Louis Capet is DEATH."* He was the first of the Girondists who was called on to vote : and it was well known they would all follow his example. Indescribable, in consequence, was the sensation in the Assembly and capital when he voted for death. Every one felt that the baseness of this party had brought their sovereign to the scaffold. "Now, boast of your orators," whispered Danton to Brissot, when the vote was given : "sublime words, dastardly deeds. What can you make of such men ? speak no more of them ; their party is gone."¹

¹ Mig. i. 236, 239. Th. iii. 330, 335. Lac. x. 233, 240. Hist. Parl. xx. 206, 207. Moniteur, Jan. 18. Lam. Hist. des Gir. v. 69.

91.
The defection of the Girondists was the cause of this.

But for the defection of the Girondists the King's life would have been saved. Forty-six of their party, besides Vergniaud, voted conditionally or unconditionally for his death. They were anxious to save the King ; but the democratic fury of the times rendered no mode of doing so practicable in their opinion but by the appeal to the people. Vergniaud spent the whole night after the fatal result in tears. Almost all of them subsequently perished on the scaffold they had prepared for their sovereign. The Duke of Orleans, when called on to give his vote, walked with a faltering step, and a face paler than death itself, to the appointed place, and there read these words :—"Exclusively governed by my duty, and convinced that all those who have resisted the sovereignty of the people deserve death—my vote is for death."² Important as the accession of the first prince of the blood was to the bloodthirsty faction, his conduct

² Bert. de Moll. x. 1, 9. Prof. Hist. de la Conv. ii. 48. Lac. x. 241.

* It is now generally admitted that this statement of the number was incorrect ; and that the real majority which condemned Louis to death was only *five*.

in this instance was too obviously selfish and atrocious not to excite a general feeling of indignation : the agitation of the Assembly became extreme : it seemed as if by this single vote the fate of the monarch was irrevocably sealed.

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1793.

When the counsel of the unfortunate monarch were called in to hear the sentence, their tears for some time choked their utterance. Malesherbes strove in vain to speak ; de Sèze at length read a protest, in which the King solemnly declared his innocence ; and Tronchet earnestly entreated the revocation of a decree passed by so slender a majority. “The laws,” it was said, “are passed by a simple majority.”—“Yes,” it was replied, “but the laws may be repealed : but who shall recall human life ?” As a last resource, the Girondists proposed a delay for a limited time ; but here, too, their fatal divisions gave the victory to their enemies, and sentence of immediate death was pronounced by a majority of 510 to 269. This decisive step produced the utmost emotion in Paris. All the members of the *Côté Droit*, all the avowed or secret royalists, were in consternation ; the Jacobins could hardly believe that so great a victory had been gained, as the condemnation of a king in the midst of a people over whom, a few years before, he was an absolute monarch. They redoubled their activity—put all their forces on foot—kept up an incessant agitation—thundered night and day at their infernal hall, and at the Cordeliers—and earnestly besought all their adherents to be vigilant for the next two days, and secure the fruits of so great a triumph. This audacity had the usual effect which force energetically applied produces on the masses of men ; it paralysed and put to silence the greater number, and excited the most profound indignation in a few resolute minds.¹

92.
Sentence of
death is pronounced.

¹ Journ. des Jacobins, Jan. 19, 20. Hist. Parl. xxiii. 269, 270. Bert. de Moll. x. 395, 397. Th. iii. 365, 390. Mig. i. 239. Lac. x. 243.

Louis was fully prepared for his fate. During the calling of the vote, he asked M. de Malesherbes, “Have you not met, near the Temple, the White Lady ?”—

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1793.

93.

Dignified
conduct of
Louis.

"What do you mean?" replied he.—"Do you not know," resumed the King with a smile, "that when a prince of our house is about to die, a female, dressed in white, is seen wandering round the palace? My friends," added he to his defenders, "I am about to depart before you to the land of the just; we shall there be reunited; and even this world will bless your virtues." His only apprehension was for his family—"I have no hope, and wish for none: I should be distressed if there was a disturbance on my account; it would cause new victims to perish. I shudder to think in what a situation I leave my children: it is by prayer alone that I can prepare my mind for my last interview with them. And my faithful servants who have not abandoned me, and have no means of subsistence but what I gave them! And the poor people, they will be delivered over to anarchy: crimes will succeed crimes: long dissensions will tear unhappy France! O my God! was this the result to which I looked for all my sacrifices? Was it for this that I strove on every occasion for the happiness of the French?" These were the only desponding expressions which escaped him during this period of his captivity. When M. de Malesherbes came to the prison to announce the result of the vote, he found Louis alone, with his forehead resting on his hands, and absorbed in a deep reverie. Without inquiring concerning his fate, or even looking at his friend, he said—"For two hours I have been revolving in my memory, whether, during my whole reign, I have voluntarily given any cause of complaint to my subjects; with perfect sincerity I can declare, when about to appear before the throne of God, that I deserve no reproach at their hands, and that I have never formed a wish but for their happiness." The old man encouraged a hope that the sentence might be revoked: he shook his head, and only entreated his friend not to leave him in his last moments.¹ But he was denied this consolation by the cruelty of the municipality: Malesherbes repeat-

¹ Bert. de
Moll. x. 496,
497. Cléry,
158, 159.
Th. iii. 283.
Mig. i. 240.
Lac. x. 245,
246.

edly applied at the gate, but never again obtained admittance. The King then desired Cléry to bring him the volume of Hume's history which contained the narrative of the death of Charles I. ; he read it sedulously for the few days which intervened before his execution. During the five preceding months, he had perused two hundred and fifty volumes.

At length on the 20th January, Santerre appeared, with a deputation from the municipality, and read the sentence of death. The King received it with unshaken firmness, and demanded a respite of three days to prepare for heaven ; to be allowed an interview with his family, and to obtain the consolation of a confessor. The two last demands alone were conceded by the Convention, and the execution was fixed for the following morning at ten o'clock. He then resumed his tranquil air, and dined as usual. The officers who guarded him had removed the knives. "Did they suppose me," said he, "base enough to kill myself? I am innocent, and can die without apprehension." The last interview with his family presented the most heart-rending scene. "At half-past eight," says Cléry, "the door of his apartment opened, and the Queen appeared, leading by the hand the Princess-Royal and the Princess Elizabeth ; they all rushed into the arms of the King. A profound silence ensued for some minutes, broken only by the sobs of the afflicted family. The King sat down, the Queen on his left, the Princess-Royal on his right, Madame Elizabeth in front, and the young Dauphin between his knees. This terrible scene lasted nearly two hours ; the tears and lamentations of the royal family, frequently interrupting the words of the King, sufficiently evinced that he had himself communicated the intelligence of his condemnation. At length, at a quarter-past ten, Louis rose ; the royal parents gave each of them their blessing to the Dauphin, while the Princess still held the King embraced round the waist. As he approached the door, they

CHAP.
VIII.

1793.

94.
Santerre
announces
the sentence,
and his last
interview
with his
family.

CHAP. uttered the most piercing shrieks. ‘I assure you I will
VIII. see you again in the morning,’ said he, ‘at eight o’clock.’

1793. ‘Why not at seven,’ exclaimed they all at once. ‘Well,

¹ Cléry, 173. then, at seven,’ answered the King. ‘Adieu, adieu!’ he
Th. iii. 394. pronounced these words with so mournful an accent,
Edge- that the lamentations redoubled, and the Princess-Royal
worth’s Der- fainted at his feet. At length, wishing to put an end to
niers Mo- Louis XVI. so trying a scene, the King embraced them all in the
mens de p. 15. Lac. tenderest manner, and tore himself from their arms.”¹

95. The remainder of the evening was spent with the con-
His last fessor, the Abbé Edgeworth, who, with heroic devotion,
communion. discharged the perilous duty of attending the last
moments of his sovereign. He was brought to the
Temple in the carriage of M. Garat, who, in that privacy,
disclosed to the minister of religion his secret admiration
for the illustrious accused—“Great God!” said he, “with
what a mission am I charged! What a man is the King!
what resignation! what courage! No; unassisted nature
could not give such strength; there is something super-
human in it.” Nothing further was said till they arrived
at the gate of the Temple; their hearts were too full for
utterance. The King shed tears when the confessor
entered. “Pardon,” said he, “a moment of weakness;
I have lived so long surrounded by my enemies, that
habit has hardened my heart. I thought I could never
weep again; but the sight of a faithful friend revives the
sensibility, which I thought had been for ever extin-
guished. Ah! why should I love so, and be so
beloved? What a heart-rending interview I have had;
but let us forget all but the great object of salvation: on
that let us concentrate all our thoughts!” Cléry then
brought in supper; the King hesitated a moment, but on
reflection sat down for five minutes, and eat with com-
posure. At twelve he went to bed, and slept peaceably
till five. He then gave his last instructions to Cléry, and
put into his hands the only property which he had still
at his disposal, a ring, a seal, and a lock of hair. “Give

this ring to the Queen," said he, "and tell her with what regret I leave her; give her also the locket containing the hair of my children; give this seal to the Dauphin; and tell them all what I suffer at dying without receiving their last embraces; but I wish to spare them the pain of so cruel a separation." He asked for scissiors to cut off his hair with his own hands, to avoid that humiliating operation being performed by the hands of the executioners; but the officers refused his request. He then received the sacrament from his confessor, at a little altar prepared by Cléry, in his chamber, and heard the last service for the dying at the time when the rolling of the drums, and the agitation in the streets, announced the preparations for his execution.¹

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1793.

¹ Cléry, 181,
182. Th.
iii. 395, 397.
Edgeworth,
16, 17, 218.

At nine o'clock, Santerre presented himself in the Temple. "You come to seek me," said the King; "allow me a minute." He went into his closet, and immediately came out with his last Testament in his hand. "I pray you," said he, "to give this packet to the Queen, my wife." "That is no concern of mine," replied the worthy representative of the municipality; "I am here only to conduct you to the scaffold." The King then asked another member of the commune to take charge of the document, and said to Santerre, "let us set off." The municipality next day published the Testament, "as a proof of the fanaticism and crimes of the King;" without intending it, they thereby raised the noblest monument to his memory.* In passing through the court of the Temple, Louis cast a last look to the tower which contained all that was dear to him in the world; and immediately summoning up his courage, seated himself calmly in the carriage beside his confessor, with two gendarmes on the opposite side. During the passage to the place of execution, which occupied two hours, he never ceased reciting the Psalms which were pointed out by the venerable priest. Even the soldiers

96.
His removal
to the place
of execu-
tion.

* See Note A, Appendix, Chap. VIII.

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1 Bert. de
Moll. x. 426,
428. Lac.
x. 254. Mig.
i. 240. Th.
iii. 398.
Cléry, 183,
194. Edge-
worth, 218,
220.

were astonished at his composure. An attempt at rescue, made by a few gallant royalists near the Port St Martin, failed from the magnitude of the military force, and the want of general support. The streets were filled with an immense crowd, who beheld in silent dismay the mournful procession: a large body of troops surrounded the carriage; a double file of soldiers and national guards, and a formidable array of cannon, rendered hopeless any attempt at rescue.¹

97.
Execution
of the King.
Jan. 21.

When the procession arrived at the place of execution, between the gardens of the Tuileries and the Champs Elysées, near the centre of the Place Louis XV., the carriage stopped, and he whispered to M. Edgeworth—"This is the place, is it not?" The Place was lined with cannon, and an innumerable multitude of heads extended as far as the eye could reach. He then descended from the carriage, and undressed himself without the aid of the executioners, but testified momentary indignation when they began to bind his hands. "No!" said he, "I will never submit to that! Do what you were ordered; but do not think of that." The executioners called for aid, and the King looked to the Abbé Edgeworth, who exclaimed, with almost inspired felicity—"Submit to that outrage as the last resemblance to the Saviour, who is about to recompense your sufferings!" "Nothing," said the King, "but such an example would make me submit to such an affront. Now, do as you please, I will drink the cup to the dregs!" At these words he resigned himself, and walked to the foot of the scaffold. He there received the sublime benediction from his confessor—"Son of St Louis, ascend to heaven!" No sooner had he mounted, than, advancing with a firm step to the front of the scaffold,* with one look he

* "Souvent avant le coup qui doit nous accabler,
La nuit qui l'enveloppe a de quoi nous troubler,
L'obscur pressentiment d'une injuste disgrâce
Combat avec effroi sa confuse menace;

imposed silence on twenty drummers, placed there to prevent his being heard, and said with a loud voice—"I die innocent of all the crimes laid to my charge; I pardon the authors of my death, and pray God that my blood may never fall upon France. And you, unhappy people"—At these words Beaufranchet, Count of Ozat, a natural son of Louis XV., the chief of the staff, by orders of Santerre, commanded the drums to beat; the executioners seized the King, and the descending axe terminated his existence. One of the assistants seized the head, and waved it in the air; the blood fell on the confessor, who was still on his knees beside the lifeless body of his sovereign.¹

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VIII.

1793.

¹ Edgeworth, 222, 225, 227.
Th. iii. 339, 340. Lac.
x. 255.
Bert. de Moll. x. 428, 429.
Lam. Hist. des Gir. v. 113.

The body of Louis was, immediately after the execution, removed into the ancient cemetery of the Madeleine, at the end of the Boulevard Italienne, where it was placed in a grave of six feet square, with its back against the wall of the Rue d'Anjou. Large quantities of quicklime were immediately thrown into the grave, which occasioned so rapid a decomposition, that when his remains were sought after in 1815, with a view to their being conveyed to the royal mausoleum in St Denis, it was with great difficulty that any part could be recovered. Near the place where he was interred, Napoleon commenced the splendid Temple of Glory, after the battle of Jena, professedly as a memorial of the Grand Army, but with the secret design of converting it into a monument to the victims of the Revolution, which he did not intend to reveal for many years, and till monarchical feelings were to a certain degree restored. The exact spot was afterwards marked by a little temple of elegant propor-

98.
Interment of his body in the Madeleine.

Mais quand ce coup tombé vient d'épuiser le sort
Jusqu'à n'en pouvoir craindre un plus barbare effort,
Ce trouble se dissipe, et cette âme innocente,
Qui brave impunément la fortune impuissante,
Regarde avec dédain ce qu'elle a combattu,
Et se rend tout entière à toute sa vertu."

CORNEILLE, *Œdipe*, Act V. Scene 9.

CHAP.
VIII.

1793.

tions, which still attests the humble grave. In this, as in so many other great designs, he was interrupted by the calamities which occasioned his fall, and the superb edifice was completed by the Bourbons, and now forms the church of the Madeleine, the most beautiful of the many beautiful structures in Paris. The King suffered almost in the centre of the Place Louis XV., but rather nearer the buildings on the northern side, on the same ground where the Queen, the Princess Elizabeth, and so many other of the noble victims of the Revolution perished ; where Robespierre and Danton, and nearly all who had been instrumental in his destruction, were afterwards executed ; and where the Emperor Alexander and the Allied sovereigns took their station, when their victorious armies entered Paris on the 31st March 1814. The greatest of revolutionary crimes was perpetrated, the greatest of revolutionary punishments was consummated, on the same spot. The history of modern Europe has not a scene fraught with equally interesting recollections to exhibit. It is now marked by the colossal obelisk of blood-red granite, which was brought from Thebes, in Upper Egypt, in 1833, by the French government. The monument, which witnessed the march of Cambyses, and survived the conquests of Alexander and Cæsar, is destined to mark, to the latest generation, the scene of the martyrdom of Louis, and of the final triumph of his avengers.¹

¹ Nap. in
Las Cases,
i. 370, 371.
Hist. de la
Conv. ii.
13, 14.

99.
Reflections
on the event,
and Louis's
character.

The character of this monarch cannot be better given than in the words of one of the ablest of the republican writers of France. "Louis inherited a revolution from his ancestors : his qualities were better fitted than those of any of his predecessors to have prevented or terminated it ; for he was capable of effecting reform before it broke out, and of discharging the duties of a constitutional throne under its influence. He was perhaps the only monarch who was subject to no passion, not even that of power, and who united the two qualities most essential

to a good king, fear of God and love of his people. He perished, the victim of passions which he had had no share in exciting ; of those of his supporters, to which he was a stranger ; of the multitude, which he had done nothing to awaken. Few kings have left so venerated a memory. History will inscribe as his epitaph, that, with a little more force of mind, he would have been a perfect sovereign.”¹ The great and touching qualities, however, exhibited by this unhappy monarch in his later days, his unexampled sufferings and tragic fate, must not throw into oblivion the ruinous consequences of the indecision and weakness of his conduct on the throne ; or make us forget that the calamities, the bloodshed, and irretrievable changes in society produced by the Revolution, sprang from his amiable but unhappy and unconquerable aversion to resolute measures. The man in existence who knew France and the Revolution best, has left a decided opinion on the subject. “Had Louis XVI.,” said Napoleon, “resisted manfully ; had he evinced the courage, the activity, the resolution of Charles I. of England, he would have triumphed.”² The emigration of the nobility, indeed, deprived him of the principal stay of the throne ; but it was the known irresolution of his character which was one main cause of that defection, by rendering the whole class of proprietors desperate when such a chief was at the head of affairs ; and the prolonged struggle in Lyons and la Vendée proved what elements of resistance remained in the nation, even after they had withdrawn.

Among those who voted for death there were many, such as the Duke of Orleans, influenced by base or selfish motives ; but the Girondists, as a body, did so, and afterwards struggled for an appeal to the people, in the hope of saving his life. In adopting this timid course, they erred as much in statesmanlike wisdom as in moral virtue. Their conduct is thus stigmatised by one of the greatest masters of political ability whom modern Europe has produced : “The Girondists and Jacobins,” says Napoleon,

CHAP.
VIII.

1793.

¹Mig. i. 241.

² Nap. in
Las Cases,
ii. 213.

100.
Reflections
on the con-
duct of the
Girondists
on this occa-
sion.

CHAP.
VIII.

1793.

“united in condemning the King to death ; and yet the majority of the former had voted for the appeal to the people, which was intended to save him. This forms the inexplicable part of their conduct. Had they wished to preserve his life, they had the power to have done so : nothing more was necessary but to have adjourned the sentence, or condemned him to exile or transportation ; but to condemn him to death, and, at the same time, endeavour to make his fate depend on a popular vote, was the height of imprudence and absurdity : it was, after having destroyed the monarchy, to endeavour to tear France in pieces by a civil war. It was this false combination which ruined them. Vergniaud, their main pillar, was the very man who pronounced as president the sentence of death on Louis ; and he did this at the moment when the predominance of their party was such in the Assembly, that it required several months of labour, and more than one popular insurrection, to overturn it. That party would have ruled the Convention, destroyed the Mountain, and governed France, if they had at once pursued a manly, straightforward course. It was the refinements of metaphysicians which occasioned their fall.” It is remarkable that Napoleon, in this instance, notwithstanding his great penetration, did not perceive the real motive which influenced the Girondists in adopting this course. It was terror and selfishness. By voting for the appeal to the people, they took a popular line, and if they had saved him, would have compromised others : in voting directly to preserve his life, they would have taken an unpopular one, and compromised themselves.¹

¹ Nap. in *Las Cases*, ii. 184, 185, 190, 191.

101.
Final in-
expedience of
the death of
Louis, even
to the Revo-
lutionists.

But there were others, doubtless, of a different character : many great and good men, who mournfully inclined to the severer course, from an opinion of its absolute necessity to annihilate a dangerous enemy, and establish a republic still unsettled. Among these must be reckoned Carnot, who, when called upon for his opinion, gave it in these

words—"Death! and never did word weigh so heavily on my heart."¹ But the fate of Louis affords a signal proof that what is unjust never is expedient, and that its ultimate tendency is to injure the cause for which it was committed. The first effect may frequently answer the expectations of its perpetrators; the last invariably disappoints them. For a few years the death of the King, by implicating so large a body of men in the support of the republic, was favourable to democracy: it ultimately led to the restoration of the monarchy. With what eagerness do the royalist historians now recount the scenes in the Temple! what would the republican writers give to be able to tear the record of them from the French annals! It must always be remembered that the actions of public men will be subjects of thought at a future period—when interest is stifled, and passion is silent—when fear has ceased to agitate, and discord is at rest; but when conscience has resumed its sway over the human heart. Nothing but what is just, therefore, can finally be expedient, because nothing else can secure the permanent concurrence of mankind.

But most of all, the *unanimous* vote of the Convention upon the guilt of Louis is the fit subject of meditation. That among seven hundred men great difference of opinion must have existed on the subject is quite certain, and is abundantly proved by the division which followed, and the narrow majority by which his death was ultimately voted. Yet even the friends of Louis were compelled to commence their efforts for his salvation by voting him guilty. The real grounds of his vindication, those on which the opinion of posterity will be founded, were by common consent abandoned. Upon a point on which history has unanimously decided one way, the Convention unanimously decided another. This result could hardly have taken place in an ordinary court of justice, composed of a few individuals whose situation was permanent, whose responsibility was fixed, whose

VIII.

1793.

¹ Carnot's
Memoirs,
97.

102.

The unanimous vote of guilty, contrary to the opinion of the majority of the Convention.

CHAP.
VIII.

1793.

duties were restricted to the consideration of evidence. It was the combination of political considerations which proved fatal to Louis : terror at a relapse into the ancient bondage to the throne ; fears for the just punishment of their innumerable crimes ; dread of the revolutionary axe, already suspended over the country. Such is the general effect of blending the legislative and the judicial functions ; of intrusting the life of a man to a popular assembly, in which numbers diminish the sense of responsibility, without increasing the power of thought ; and the contagion of a multitude adds to the force of passion, without diminishing the influence of fear.¹

¹ Toul. iii.
226, 233.
Mig. i. 237.
Lac x. 220,
240.

103.
It illustrates
the action
of a despotic
majority.

But this is not all. This extraordinary vote is a signal proof of the effects of democratic institutions, and of the utter impossibility of free discussion existing, or public justice being done, in a country in which the whole weight is thrown into the popular scale. It is well known that in America the press, when united, is omnipotent, and can at any time drive the most innocent person into exile ; and that the judgments of the courts of law, though unexceptionable between man and man, are often notoriously unjust on any popular question, from the absence of any counterpoise to the power of the people. The same truth was experienced, in the most cruel manner, on the trial of Louis. That those who were inclined to save him in the Convention were men of the greatest talents, is evident from their speeches ; that they were possessed of the noblest courage, was afterwards proved by their deaths. Yet these intrepid men were obliged, for his sake, to commence the struggle by voting him guilty. To have done otherwise, would have been to have delivered him unsupported into the hands of his enemies ; to have totally destroyed their influence with the people ; to have ruined themselves without saving him. So true is it, that the extreme of democracy is as fatal to freedom as unmitigated despotism : that truth is as seldom heard in the assemblies of the multitude as in the halls of

princes ; and that, without a due equipoise between the conflicting ranks of society, the balance may be cast as far the one way as the other, and the axe of the populace become as subversive of justice as the bowstring of the Sultaun.

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1793.

But truth is great, and will prevail. The reign of injustice is not eternal ; no special interposition of Providence is required to arrest it ; no avenging angel need descend to terminate its wrathful course. It destroys itself by its own violence : the counteracting force arises from its own iniquity ; the avenging angel is found in the human heart. In vain the malice of his enemies subjected Louis to every indignity ; in vain the executioners bound his arms, and the revolutionary drums stifled his voice ; in vain the edge of the guillotine destroyed his body, and his remains were consigned to unhallowed ground. His spirit has triumphed over the wickedness of his oppressors. From his death has begun a reaction in favour of order and religion throughout the globe. His sufferings have done more for the cause of monarchy than all the vices of his predecessors had undone. The corruptions had become such, that they could be expiated, as has been finely said, only “ by the blood of the just ascending to heaven by the steps of the scaffold.”*

104.
Reflections
on the death
of Louis.

It is by the last emotions that the great impression on mankind is made. In this view it was eminently favourable to the interests of society that the crisis of the French monarchy arrived in the reign of Louis. It fell not during the days of its splendour or its wickedness ; under the haughtiness of Louis XIV. or the infamy of du Barri. It perished in the person of a spotless monarch, who, most of all his subjects, loved the people ; whose life had literally been spent in doing good ; whose failings, equally with his virtues, should have protected him from popular violence. Had he possessed more

105.
Its unpar-
donable
atrocious.

* DE TOCQUEVILLE, *Histoire de Louis XV.*, ii. 533.

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daring, he would have been less unfortunate ; had he strenuously supported the cause of royalty, he would not have suffered from the fury of the populace ; had he been more prodigal of the blood of others, he would in all probability have saved his own. But such warlike or ambitious qualities could not with certainty have been relied upon to arrest the Revolution ; they would have postponed it to another reign, but it might, under the rule of an equally irresolute prince, have then come under darker auspices, when the cessation of tyranny had not extinguished the real cause of popular complaint, and the virtues of the monarch had not made unpardonable the fury of the people. The catastrophe occurred when all the generous feelings of our nature were awakened on the suffering side, to a sovereign who had done more for the cause of freedom than all the ancestors of his race ; whose forbearance had been rewarded by encroachment ; meekness by licentiousness ; aversion to violence by the thirst for human blood. A monarch of a more energetic character might have done more to postpone the Revolution ; none could have done so much to prevent its recurrence.

106.
And ultimate beneficial effects.

Nor has the martyrdom of Louis been lost to the immediate interests of the cause for which he suffered. His resignation in adversity, charity in suffering, heroism in death, will never be forgotten. The terrors of the republican reign, the glories of the imperial throne, have passed away ; but the spotless termination of the monarchy has left an impression on mankind which will never be effaced. In the darkest night of the moral world, a flame has appeared in the tower of the Temple, at first feeble and struggling for existence, but which now burns with a steady ray, and has thrown a sainted light over the fall of the French monarchy. The days, indeed, of superstition are past : multitudes of pilgrims will not throng to his tomb, and stone will not be worn by the knees of his worshippers ; but the days of admiration for departed

excellence will never be past. To his historic shrine will come the virtuous and the pious through every succeeding age ; his fate will be commiserated, his memory revered, his murderers execrated, so long as justice and mercy shall prevail upon the earth.

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CHAPTER IX.

STATE OF EUROPE PRIOR TO THE WAR, AND CAUSES WHICH
LED TO IT.

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1.
Great ex-
citement in
Europe in
consequence
of the
French Re-
volution.

“A REVOLUTION in France,” says Napoleon, “is always, sooner or later, followed by a Revolution in Europe.” Placed in the centre of modern civilisation, this great country has, in every age, communicated the impulse of its own changes to the adjoining states. It was not to be expected that so important an event as the French Revolution, rousing as it did the passions of one, and exciting the apprehensions of another portion of mankind, all the world over, should long remain an object of passive observation to the adjoining states. It addressed itself to the hopes and prejudices of the great body of the people in every country, and, exciting their ill-smothered indignation against their superiors, super-added to the sense of real injuries the more powerful stimulus of revolutionary ambition. A ferment, accordingly, immediately began to spread through the neighbouring kingdoms; extravagant hopes were formed; chimerical anticipations indulged; and the labouring classes, inflated by the rapid elevation of their brethren in France, deemed the time approaching when the distinctions of society were to cease, and the miseries of poverty to expire, amidst the universal dominion of the people. The rise of this terrible spirit, destined to convulse the globe, excited the utmost alarm in all the

European monarchies. From it sprang the bloody wars of the French Revolution, undertaken to crush the evil, but which at first tended only to extend its devastation by ingrafting on the energy of democratic ambition the power of military conquest. With them began a new series of strifes; they terminated the contests of kings among each other, and commenced that of one social principle against another. Wars, thenceforward, became the result of conflicting opinions rather than of contending interests, and the jealousies of sovereigns amongst each other were forgotten in the vehement animosities of their subjects. They assumed a less interested but more terrible character; the passions which were roused brought whole nations into the field, and the strife which ensued involved everything which was most dear to all classes of society.

Great Britain, Austria, Russia, and Prussia were the most powerful monarchies, apart from France, that then existed in Europe; and some account of them is indispensable before entering on the events which led to the war.

If we consider the geographical extent and physical resources of Great Britain, nothing in the whole annals of mankind appears more extraordinary than the vast and durable impression that country has made in human affairs. Including Ireland, the British Islands comprise only 91,000 geographical or 122,000 square English miles. This extent is little more than half of the area of France, not more than a third of that of Austria, and scarce a thirteenth of that of Russia in Europe alone.* A large part of this diminutive territory is

2.
Superficial
extent of the
British Isles.

	Sq. Geog. Miles.
* Great Britain and Ireland contain	91,000
France,	156,000
Austrian Empire,	271,208
Russia in Europe,	1,200,000

—See MALTE-BRUN, vi. 638; v. 726: iii. 197, 198; and iv. 257.

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¹ Malte-
Brun, iv.
257. Por-
ter's Prog-
of the Na-
tion, i. 177.

3.
General
aspect of
the British
Islands.

sterile and unproductive. In Scotland alone, the mountain wastes, a very small part of which are alone improvable, extend over fourteen millions of acres, being nearly four-fifths of that whole country. The wastes in Great Britain and Ireland cover no less than 30,871,000 acres, being about three-sevenths of the entire territory, which contains 77,000,000 acres. Of the part which is under cultivation, not 20,000,000 acres in both islands are under the plough, the meadows and pasturage which cover so vast an extent of England being above 27,000,000. Thus the arable land which furnishes the staple of subsistence to the population of the British Islands, which is now about 27,000,000 souls, is under 20,000,000 acres, or three-fourths of an acre to each. This is after taking into view the grain that is absorbed in maintaining horses and cattle; an astonishing fact, when the large proportion of the produce of arable land which is consumed in brewing and distillation is taken into consideration.^{1*}

The aspect of nature is very various in the different parts of the British Islands. In the south of England, and in the level parts of Ireland, the earth is fertile, the climate temperate. Vegetation, unaided, springs up in rich luxuriance, and huge trees, the sure mark of a prolific soil, adorn and give variety to the landscape. A range of mountains, almost uninterrupted by plains, runs along the whole western parts of Great Britain, and forms suc-

* The following table exhibits the several proportions of arable land, meadow, and waste, in the United Kingdom at this time (1843).

	Arable and Garden.	Pasture and Meadow.	Waste Cultivable.	Waste Un- improvable.	Total.
England, acres.	10,252,800	15,379,200	3,431,000	3,256,400	32,332,400
Wales, ...	890,570	2,226,430	530,000	1,105,000	4,752,000
Scotland, ...	2,496,950	2,771,050	5,950,000	8,523,930	19,738,930
Ireland, ...	5,389,040	6,736,240	1,900,000	2,116,664	19,441,944
Lesser islands,	169,630	274,000	166,000	569,469	1,119,099
	19,135,990	27,386,920	14,980,000	15,871,463	77,394,433

PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, i. p. 177.

cessively the western and southern Highlands of Scotland, the mountains of Cumberland and Wales, and the high grounds of Devonshire. Another ridge of inferior height, and often rather a series of elevated plateaus than a range of hills, runs parallel to the former, and, with few interruptions, intersects from north to south the whole of the island. It forms successively the green hills and grassy dells of Southern Scotland, the dark and shapeless swells of Stanmore and Ingleborough, and the romantic slopes of Derbyshire. But this ridge does not extend to the south of the Thames ; its vast moors and dark heaths are confined to the northern parts of the island ; to the south of that river the hills are gentle, fertility general, and the wide expanse of arable land spreads out into level plains, rivalling those of Lombardy and Flanders in extent and fertility.

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1792.

The chief rivers of Great Britain, accordingly, from this inclination of the ground, flow from the high grounds in the centre of the island to the sea on either side. Of these the principal are the Thames, which, after stealing past the spires and domes of Oxford, flows through green meadows to that mighty capital, the modern Babylon, where nearly all the commerce of the world has found its emporium ; the Severn, which winds through beauteous vales and flowering orchards, to the great mercantile outlet of Bristol ; the Mersey, which beholds at its estuary the whole commerce of England and America accumulated in a single harbour ; the Tyne and the Humber, which, meandering to the eastward through the rich plains of Yorkshire and Durham, float in their bosoms, where they join the sea, the vast coasting navy of England. Nor are the rivers of Scotland less noted by the efforts of industry and the magic of song. The Clyde, after descending over cataracts inferior only to that of Schaffhausen in sublimity, flows through luxuriant beauty to the vast commercial city of Glasgow, and issues to the sea beneath the noble mountains of Arran ; the Forth,

4.
Rivers of
Great
Britain.

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separating, as it were, the island into two parts, opens into the beautiful estuary that bears its name, and gives life to the matchless landscape of Edinburgh ; the Tay, long fed by mountain torrents, and winding through Highland glens, at length issues into the plains by the magnificent gorge of Dunkeld, and washes successively the rich fields of Perthshire and the rising harbour of Dundee ; the Dee, flowing in a sequestered valley between lofty mountains, meanders far amidst pine forests, till it joins the sea beside the crowded harbour and indefatigable industry of Aberdeen ; and the Tweed, albeit never losing its pastoral character, nor mingling with the busy scenes of men, has yet acquired deathless renown, for it first inspired the genius, and now flows past the grave of Scott.

5.
General
aspect of
Scotland.

The soil and climate of Scotland, even where it is susceptible of cultivation, is incomparably less favoured by nature than that of the southern parts of the island. The level portions of the country are few and narrow, generally spreading little more than a few miles on either side of the numerous streams and rivers which descend from its hills and elevated moors. The intermediate districts, covered with heath or rushes, variously elevated from three to fifteen hundred feet above the sea, are in great part incapable of profitable cultivation ; and even after the efforts of husbandry have been applied to them, constant industry and no small expenditure of capital are required to prevent them from being overrun by their original vegetation, and becoming again the abode of the moorfowl and the plover. In the Highlands, which cover four-fifths of the region beyond the Forth, nature has stamped a character upon the country which must remain for ever the same. All the efforts of man there appear as nothing amidst the gloomy immensity of the mountains, or the dark shades of the forests ; and the eloquent description by Gibbon of Caledonia in the days of the Romans, is there still applicable, at least to

inanimate objects—"The masters of the fairest and the most wealthy portion of the globe turned with contempt from gloomy hills assailed by the winter tempest, from lakes concealed in a blue mist, and from cold and lonely heaths, over which the deer of the forest were chased by a troop of naked barbarians."¹

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¹ Gibbon,
ch. i. vol. i.
p. 6.

Ireland, if the natural capabilities of the country are alone considered, appears to have been more bountifully dealt with by nature than any part of equal extent in Great Britain. Without the vast mountain-ranges of Scotland, without the sharp gravelly downs which it is so difficult to bring to fertility in England, it has a soil generally level and rich, and a temperature equally removed from the scorching heats of tropical, or the cold storms of northern climates. Such is the mildness of the air in the southern parts of the island, where it projects into the Atlantic waves, that snow seldom lies more than a single day; and the rocks of Killarney and Bantry Bay are covered with a luxuriant fringe of arbutus, on which its brilliant scarlet berry is often to be seen; a proof of the softness of winter, which is not again to be met with till the traveller, after traversing the Pontine marshes, reaches the foot of the rocks of Terracina. Owing to the maritime character of the climate, the warmth of summer is not proportionate to the mildness of winter, and frequent rains attest the agency of the clouds which have become charged with humidity in their passage over the Atlantic. But this humidity is itself a prolific source of riches; it promotes a rapid and almost ceaseless vegetation, which appears in the vast produce of the pastures, and the extraordinary rapidity with which trees and evergreens spring up in every sheltered situation.²

6.
General
features of
Ireland.

² Personal
observation.

It is perhaps the most extraordinary proof that ever occurred of the superior influence of mental qualities over physical circumstances, in the production of human felicity, that this fertile and beautiful island has always been

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7.
Difference
between the
agricultural
produce of
Great Bri-
tain and
Ireland.

incomparably the worst-conditioned part of the British dominions ; and that Scotland, which has been blessed rather than cursed with a rigorous climate and sterile soil, is by universal consent admitted to be the best. From the investigations made by the parliamentary committee of the Lords in 1836 and 1837, it distinctly appeared that the average produce of an acre in Ireland is not a fourth of what it is in England, although the amount of labour bestowed upon it is twice as great ; in other words, an equal amount of agricultural labour produces *eight times* as much subsistence in England as in Ireland. And while the average produce in all the counties of England is two quarters and five bushels of wheat an acre,* in Scotland it is, of the same grain, three quarters and six bushels ; and the value of the agricultural produce raised from the 5,500,000 acres of arable and grass land of the latter country, is £20,435,000 annually. Thus, on a much inferior soil, and under the influence of a much ruder climate, the produce of an equal amount of agricultural labour is fully *ten times* greater in Scotland than in Ireland—a fact which speaks volumes as to the incalculable influence of national character and industrious habits on the permanent prosperity of nations.¹

¹ Lords' Report, 1836 and 1837. McCulloch's Stat. of England, i. 476. Gazetteer of Scotland, i. Introduction, p. 22. Highland Society's Statistics.

8.

Population
of the Bri-
tish Isles.

The population of the British Islands, which, by the census in 1841, was above 27,000,000, had certainly not attained in 1793, when the contest commenced, to much more than half that number. By the census of 1801, which was the first regular one that ever was taken, the population of Great Britain was 10,942,000 souls ; and eight years before, it certainly could not have exceeded 10,000,000. If to this is added 4,000,000 for the population of Ireland at the same period, the result will be about 14,000,000 for the whole inhabitants of the

* Of oats, the average is 4 quarters 3½ bushels ; of barley, 4 quarters ¼ bushel. McCULLOCH'S *British Empire*, i. 476.

British Islands when the war broke out.* This limited population, and the slow progress which it had made during the preceding century, is very remarkable, whether we consider the wonderful achievements of the country with those inconsiderable numbers, the much greater population of the country to which it was opposed, which had in France alone 25,000,000 souls, or the prodigious start which the numbers of the people have since made, during and subsequent to the strife. The population of the British Isles had not advanced more than seventy per cent in the preceding century, whereas in the half century that next elapsed it doubled;† and this great increase has taken place during a contest for life or death with an enemy, which, beginning with 25,000,000 under its rule, at one period came to have 42,000,000, besides as many more arrayed among its allied or tributary states. Nothing can evince more clearly the desperate nature of the contest, or the prodigious influ-

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* The census of 1841, which combines the general results of all those hitherto made by authority of Government, exhibits the following picture of the progress of the population of the empire from the commencement of the present century:—

	1801.	1811.	1821.	1831.	1841.
Great Britain, viz.					
England,	8,382,434	9,538,827	11,261,437	13,091,005	14,995,138
Wales,	547,346	611,788	717,439	806,182	911,603
Travelling,	...	...	...	...	5,016
Scotland,	1,599,068	1,805,658	2,095,456	2,365,114	2,620,184
Great Britain,	10,472,048	11,906,303	14,072,231	16,262,301	18,531,941
Ireland,	5,396,436	5,987,836	6,801,827	7,767,401	8,175,124
Lesser islands,	...	...	89,488	103,600	124,040
Army, navy, &c.	470,586	640,300	319,300	277,017	188,453
	16,338,102	18,534,659	21,262,966	24,410,429	27,019,553

—*Census*, 1841, pp. 7, 8.

† The progress of population in England and Wales, during the preceding century, had been very different:—

1700	5,134,516	1760	6,479,730
1710	5,066,337	1770	7,227,586
1720	5,345,351	1780	7,814,827
1730	5,687,993	1790	8,540,738
1740	5,629,705	1800	9,187,176
1750	6,039,684		

—PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, i. 11.

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ence of the energy it developed upon the future growth and destinies of mankind.

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9.
Great influ-
ence of race
on national
character.

The contrast afforded by the present situation of the southern and western parts of Ireland (for the north is peopled by the British race, and in character much resembles Great Britain) affords decisive evidence that it is in the dispositions of the inhabitants that we are to look for the main cause of the greatness of the British empire. Philosophers may have some difficulty in explaining how it happens ; but the slightest acquaintance with history must be sufficient to demonstrate, that there is an essential difference in the intellectual qualities and ruling propensities of the various races of mankind ; and that to the indelible influence of this cause, more even than to the effect of climate, situation, or institutions, the extraordinary diversities in the history and ultimate fate of nations are to be ascribed. While some are industrious, energetic, and persevering, others, under precisely similar physical circumstances, are impassioned, volatile, and capricious. While some have an elasticity which causes them to rise superior to the greatest calamities, and often extract good out of the extremity of evil, others are distinguished by a heedlessness which nothing can overcome, and an insensibility to the future which renders valueless in their hands the greatest present advantages. Institutions which philosophers contemporary with the French Revolution generally represented as the real moulders of human character, it is now seen, are in reality more frequently moulded by it. Forms of government are rather the result of national temperament, long and imperceptibly acting on the administration of public affairs, than the means of producing any durable alteration in the disposition of the inhabitants subjected to their influence. No calamities have been found to be so overwhelming as those arising from the forcible transference to the people of one race of the institutions of another. The example of Poland sinking into ruin, at the very time when the

neighbouring empires of Austria, Russia, and Prussia were rising to greatness ; of Britain, great, powerful, and prosperous, when the people of the south and west of Ireland are poor, indolent, and discontented ; of the South American republics, lost in an endless maze of convulsions, at the time when the Federal Union of the north of the same continent is blessed with remarkable social prosperity ; of the enthusiasm of the French Revolution, terminating in a monarchy as despotic as that of Louis XIV. ; and of Spain, well-nigh blotted from the book of nations by the iniquitous forcing upon it of liberal institutions, under which other states have risen to durable celebrity,—have not been written in vain in the annals of history.

The character of the Anglo-Saxons, which has now become that of nearly the whole of Great Britain, and of the province of Ulster, where their race has long been predominant, is very remarkable, and differs in many essential particulars from any which has yet appeared among mankind. It is not that which is peculiar to any one family of men, or it would never have done such great things. Formed by the successive inroads of many different hordes, who settled at different times in their territories, that race early acquired in the school of adversity a character almost exclusively its own. Upon the original stock of the Celts or Gaels, the descendants of whom, in nearly unmixed purity, are still to be seen among the mountains of the western parts of Scotland, Cumberland, and Wales, there has been successively engrafted the blood of the brave and persevering Romans, of the simple and honest Saxons, of the ruthless and rapacious Danes, and of the chivalrous and haughty Normans. That the Anglo-Saxons were the most numerous and powerful of those different races of conquerors, need be told to none who reflect on the language which the English speak, the name which they bear, the light hair and blue eyes by which they are in general distinguished. But it is not the German blood alone which runs in the veins of the British

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10.
Character of
the Anglo-
Saxons.

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people—it is not German simplicity alone which appears amongst them. Other nations have bequeathed to them their peculiarities and dispositions ; and it is the blending of the whole which has produced the mingled virtues and vices of the British character.

11.
Energy and
perseve-
rance of the
Anglo-
Saxons.

The grand peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxon race are their ENERGY and PERSEVERANCE. The history of nations, as much as the experience of common life around us, must convince every one, that although these qualities, if turned into a wrong direction, may often become the source of the greatest calamities, yet they are an element essential both for national and individual success ; and that, if kept in the right channel, they are the only sure foundation for public or private elevation. The Germans are as persevering, the Normans as ardent ; it is the union of ardour with perseverance, of energy with industry, of fixity of purpose with effort in pursuit, which characterises England, and has been the cause of its long-continued greatness. And these qualities appear in the clearest manner both in its past history and present situation. In other states, great and heroic, but generally transient, efforts in defence of freedom have been made ; but in England the people have never ceased to contend for that blessing since the days of Edward the Confessor—a period now of a thousand years. In other free communities, the aristocracy have generally in the end yielded to the pressure of internal ambition, or the force of external power ; but in England, though often sorely straitened, and at times to all appearance entirely overthrown, the nobles have ever in the end reasserted their pre-eminence, and acquired the lead in the state. Impatient of injury, the English are submissive to taxation, when they see its necessity, and hence the astonishing national efforts which this nation has repeatedly made.* In other countries,

* “ Ipsi Britannii delectum ac tributum et injunctum imperii munera impigre obiciunt, si injuria abicit ; hoc agere tolerant ; in domum et parant, nondum ut serviant.”

TACITUS, *Aggredat*, c. 13. National character seems indelible and unchangeable ; this might pass for a description of the English at the present day.

wealth has for a season, generally fleeting, attended the victories of power, or the combinations of wisdom ; but in England the efforts of the nation to acquire opulence, though often misdirected and calamitous, have been so incessant, that they have now acquired a colossal amount of power and riches unknown in any former age of the world.* In other countries, external success has been various, and successive ebbs and flows in the national progress have attested the mutability of the smiles of fortune ; but in England alone in modern, as in Rome in ancient times, this general instability in human affairs seems to have been mastered by some higher power ; and though calamities, numerous and dreadful, have been sustained, yet they have been all speedily repaired, until the empire has encircled the globe in its arms, and attained a magnitude unattained either by the legions of Cæsar or the phalanx of Alexander.

But this energy and perseverance are valuable national qualities only when properly directed ; they are nearly allied to corresponding vices, and may, if turned to selfish or unworthy purposes, become the source of unbounded corruption and irreparable calamities. The English will do nothing by halves ; if they become corrupt, they will

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12.
Their corre-
sponding
vices.

* The following Table exhibits a picture of the British Empire at this period (1841) :—

	Population.	Extent in English sq. miles.
GREAT BRITAIN, viz. :—		
England,	14,995,138	50,387
Wales,	911,603	7,425
Scotland,	2,620,184	32,167
Travelling,	5,016	
Total, Great Britain,	18,531,941	89,979
Ireland,	8,175,124	32,512
Lesser Isles,	114,040	332
Dependencies in Europe,	158,729	124
do. Asia, India,	83,800,000	630,000
do. Ceylon, and Hong-Kong,	1,242,000	24,664
do. Africa,	288,613	200,723
do. North America,	1,530,400	754,577
Carry forward,	113,340,847	1,732,911

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be corrupt indeed. A bad Englishman may not be so cruel, but he is in other respects a more profligate and hardened villain than the wicked of any other European state. The same fixity of purpose and ardour in pursuit, which, rightly directed, leads to greatness and renown, if turned to selfish or degrading objects, must end in the most overwhelming corruption. The inhabitants of Great Britain are grave ; and it is in grave nations, as in individuals, that intensity and durability of passion are to be found. It is shallow streams only that sparkle and ripple in their course ; the greater the force of the current in the deep one, the more smooth is its surface. Already the national temperament has given evident marks of a tendency to set in toward the wrong direction, and woe to the nation when that becomes general ! An insatiable thirst for excitement and pleasure in some classes, an unbounded desire for wealth or distinction in others, have become as it were national characteristics, and scruples in the means by which these objects are to be gained are fast melting away before the increasing ardour in the pursuit. The prodigious extent to which the passions for intoxication and sexual licentiousness are indulged in all our great towns, may prove to what lengths the tempera-

		Population.	Extent in English sq. miles.
	Brought over,	113,340,847	1,732,911
Dependencies in South America,	.	100,300	52,400
do. West Indies,	.	790,800	77,552
do. Australasia,	.	197,912	474,000
		114,429,859	2,336,863
Army and Navy,	.	189,453	
		114,618,312	
Total British Empire,	.	221,057	1,041
Protected States in Europe, (Ionian Islands,)	.	40,000,000	550,000
do. India,	.		
Total British Empire and dependencies,	.	154,839,969	2,887,904

—*Census* 1841 ; and MALTE BRUN, iv. 154, 257.

The Roman Empire at the period of its greatest elevation contained 120,000,000 of inhabitants : that of Alexander the Great about 80,000,000. The former embraced 1,600,000 square miles, for the most part fertile ; the latter about half that extent. — GIBBON, chapter i. vol. i. pp. 37, 57.

ment of the Anglo-Saxons will lead them when directed to sensual gratification ; and, although the objects of physical desire change as opulence progresses, the desire itself is rather increased than diminished. There will be no "*dolce far niente*" in Great Britain when corruption becomes general : they will do enough, but it will be little else than evil.

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Perhaps no two nations ever exhibited a more striking contrast in national qualities than the inhabitants of Great Britain and those of the genuine Hibernian race in the south and west of Ireland. Unlike their countrymen in Ulster, who are laborious, active, and steady as their progenitors of the Norman or Anglo-Saxon blood, their character is the very reverse of that of the British, and much more closely resembles that of the French, though with some important distinctions from theirs also. Brave, both individually and collectively ; kind, charitable, light-hearted, and grateful, they possess many virtues which, in private life, must command esteem or win affection. But they appear to be almost entirely destitute of those more commanding qualities which are necessary to success in the world, and which, for good or for evil, stamp a great destiny on nations. Ever vehement, often impassioned, they yet want the regulated ardour which sustains great undertakings. Indolent and excitable, they seek gratification rather in taking vengeance on their enemies than in improving themselves. They are too short-sighted to see what is necessary to durable success—too volatile and inconsiderate to make the sacrifices necessary to attain it. Ever since their conquest early in the twelfth century by Henry II., they have never ceased to nourish a feeling of hatred towards the Saxons, which has frequently burst forth in frightful acts of vengeance ; but they have never seen that it was only by adopting the arts and imitating the industry of the stranger, that they could be enabled to contend with him. Though possessing more than double the population, and quadruple the physical resources, of

13.
Character of
the Irish.

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the northern neighbours of England, they were conquered with ease by eleven hundred English men-at-arms and two thousand archers, who followed the Plantagenet standard; while eighty thousand English soldiers have been repeatedly hurled back from the comparatively desolate and ill-peopled realm of Scotland. They were for long after retained in subjection by so small a force, that even in the time of Elizabeth it only amounted to one thousand, and on emergencies to two thousand men. So true in every age has been the character given of them by Agricola—"Sæpe ex eo (Agricola) audiui, *legione unâ et modicis auxiliis* debellari obtinerique Hiberniam posse."¹*

¹ Hume, c. 44, vol. iv. p. 145.

14.
Their want
of pacific in-
dustry and
enterprise.

They have proved themselves as incapable of rivalling the British in peace as they were of resisting them in war. They have neither imitated their husbandry nor adopted their manufactures. Their noble natural harbours are desolate, their magnificent fisheries untouched, their rich mineral fields unexplored. Nay, so far has their animosity gone, that, like the American Indians, they repel or shun the approach of civilisation. If an English manufacturer, bringing bread to thousands, settles in their country, they burn down his factory; if a Scotch farmer appears, capable of quadrupling the produce of their soil, they shoot him through the head. To maintain an idle and barbarous independence is their idea of freedom; to repel the first advances of industry their principle of patriotism.† They have gained their object. Capital shuns their fertile and peopled shores; and the overflowing wealth of England seeks rather the risks of South American insolvency, or North American repudiation, than the certainty of Irish violence. Equal, perhaps superior, to the English in genius,

* "I have often heard from him (Agricola), that by a single legion and a few auxiliaries Ireland might be conquered and retained in subjection."—TACITUS, *Agricola*, c. 24.

† They did the same from the earliest times. Shan O'Neil, the great chieftain who in 1560 commenced the Tyrone Rebellion, "put to death several of his followers, because they endeavoured to introduce the *use of bread* after the English fashion,—HUME, c. 44, iv. 145.

they have seldom directed it to any useful purpose : this want of steadiness in pursuit, this absence of a practical turn, have been their perpetual bane. Constantly complaining of evils, they have never suggested any efficient remedy for them ; ever exclaiming against misgovernment, they have never given the remotest indication of a capacity to govern themselves. With the exception of numerous brave recruits which they have ever furnished for our armies, they have scarcely at any time contributed anything to the general support of the empire. Though treated with extraordinary, perhaps unmerited, indulgence in taxation,* their national resources are hardly drawn forth ; and the most fertile part of the British dominions is disgraced by two millions of paupers, in a land which might with ease maintain three times its present number of inhabitants.†

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The second great circumstance which has contributed to the steady progress and present greatness of the British empire, is the insular situation of Great Britain, and its happy position in the European seas. Though the territorial extent of the British Islands is so inconsiderable, yet that of its sea-coast is comparatively very great ; and two islands, which embrace only 122,000 square English miles of surface, are encircled by above 3000 miles of sea-coast. Numerous natural harbours in this ample circuit, especially on the west coast, provide secure asylums for

15.
Happy situation of Great Britain for commerce.

* The Irish never paid either the income-tax nor poor-rates, by far the heaviest direct taxes in Great Britain, till 1837 ; and the excise and the customhouse duties were, till very lately, and in some articles still are, materially lower than in the neighbouring island of Great Britain. Large sums have been paid for above half a century to the charitable establishments of Ireland from the public funds of the empire, while England and Scotland maintained their own poor from local taxation ; and in the famine of 1847, produced by the failure of the potato crop, *ten millions sterling* was given from the British treasury to relieve the distress of Ireland, with scarcely any prospect of repayment ; while Scotland, albeit afflicted by a similar calamity, got nothing.

† It is hardly necessary to remark, that these observations apply to the Irish race as a whole, and in that respect only. The author is well aware that many men of great talents, as well as the most estimable character, are to be found among them. But that the description given regarding them in general is not overcharged, appears from the following account of his countrymen, given by

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shipping. Milford Haven in South Wales, and Lamlash Bay in the island of Arran, in Scotland, are both magnificent natural havens, either of which is capable of containing the whole British navy. By far the finest harbours, however, which nature has given to the British Islands, are to be found on the western coast of Ireland, where they lie ready, as it were, to receive the whole trade of the New World in their capacious bosoms. But the indolence and want of perseverance of the inhabitants of those highly favoured regions have rendered them, hitherto at least, of no service to the community; and the vast trade of America passes on to the Mersey, where, amidst dangerous shoals, and an open beach, industry and perseverance have reared the now magnificent docks of Liverpool.

16.
Nursery for
seamen in
its coasting
trade and
fisheries.

But if in this quarter the heedlessness of man has hitherto rendered nugatory the choicest gifts of nature, in other parts of the British Islands his energy and vigour have converted the apparent hardships of his situation into the elements of strength and the source of riches. Around the stormy and inhospitable Hebrides, and in the dark and dangerous seas that flow round the Orkney Islands, thirty-five thousand hardy seamen are engaged in fisheries, which now cause to flow into the British empire that stream of wealth which the republic of Holland so long drew from the deep-sea fisheries in the North Seas. The tempestuous German Ocean, and iron-bound east

the able Catholic bishop, Dr Doyle:—"What," says he, addressing his flock, "are the sources of your evils? A disregard of yourselves, springing out of your own worthlessness, your own idleness, your own drunkenness, your own want of energy and industry in improving your own condition. These are your vices, the fruits of long-continued and grinding oppression, the almost hereditary vices of the Irish people. Your situation never can or will improve until unceasing industry succeed to idleness, until obedience to the laws and self-respect become the characteristic of the Irish people. Till then, you may complain of oppression, but it will not cease. You may rail at the law; but it will persecute you. No power on earth can at once remedy your evils. The Government and Legislature are endeavouring to heal them, but time is necessary for the accomplishment of so great a work. More depends on you than on acts of Parliament. All the laws that ever were enacted would not make an idle or a violent people rich or happy." - BISHOP DOYLE'S *Pastoral Charge*, 1821; *Lords' Report on Tithes*, 1832, ii. 52.

coast of England, which render a voyage from London to Edinburgh more perilous to the inexperienced navigator than one to the East Indies, have conspired to produce that incomparable race of seamen—in every age the nursery of the British navy—who carry on the vast coasting trade by which coal is conveyed from the mouth of the Tyne to the Thames ; while the whole southern coast of Great Britain is studded with active fishing-stations, whose indefatigable sailors supply the huge metropolis with the delicacies of the table, and are superior to any in the world in hardihood and daring.

So favourable is the situation of Great Britain for foreign commerce, that it is recorded by the ancient historians, that when Carausius, the Roman governor of the island, threw off the yoke of the Capitol, he succeeded, by means of his fleets, in maintaining his independence for sixteen years, and the future mistress of the waves, in Gibbon's words, had already assumed its station as a respectable maritime power. It is not merely the extent of its sea-coast, and the intrepidity which necessity has imparted to its seamen, which is the cause of this superiority ; it is owing, also, in an equal degree, to its happy situation with reference to external commerce. Placed midway between northern and southern Europe, the English ships had only half the distance to go to supply the wants of either ; and thus their vessels became the readiest vehicle by which the productions of the north and the south were mutually exchanged for each other. When the passage round the Cape of Good Hope was discovered, the situation of Great Britain was found to be the best adapted of any in Europe for the formation of a great emporium for Asiatic merchandise ; and thus it became, to the destruction of Venice, the centre of that lucrative traffic which in every age has constituted the principal source of commercial greatness. When America was gradually peopled with British descendants, and the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon race in the New World

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17.

Its happy
situation for
foreign com-
merce.

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¹ Gibbon, c.
xi. vol. i.18.
And vast
mineral
riches.

opened a market for manufacturing industry greater than any other in existence, the British Isles still remained in the very front of the traffic, and their cliffs formed the first landmarks to the Transatlantic mariner on approaching the European shores. Thus Great Britain, alike by its situation, its advantages, and its dangers, was fitted by nature for commercial greatness; and the empire of the seas was in a manner forced upon it by Providence, as a part of the mysterious design going forward for the colonisation and peopling of the earth.¹

But if this object is apparent from the external situation of the British Isles, what shall be said to the astonishing mines of wealth which they contain in their bosom? It is in them that the Anglo-Saxon race have found treasures far exceeding those of Mexico or Peru. Valueless to the unskilled barbarian, unknown during many subsequent ages of national advancement, they have come to yield boundless streams of wealth to reward civilised industry, and contain the elements of the greatest achievements for the ceaseless efforts of practised knowledge. Across England there runs, in a diagonal direction, dipping towards the south-west, a broad belt of coal and ironstone. Similar strata in Scotland lie beneath the basins of the Clyde and the Forth; and these valuable seams, often in close juxtaposition to each other, at once furnish the means of obtaining the great moving power of Steam, which subsequent discoveries have rendered the indispensable foundation of manufacturing opulence, and the materials of the most extensive and durable manufacture which the wants of man require in civilised life.* It is to the presence

* Sixty years ago James Watt said, speaking of the cotton fabrics of Glasgow—"The manufacturers of Glasgow are quite wrong in seeking the materials for their fabrics in America; *their cotton is to be found under their own feet.*" Subsequent times have abundantly proved the sagacity of the prophecy. There are now sixty-five blast furnaces in Lanarkshire, consuming annually 650,000 tons of coal, and producing now (1840) 260,000 tons of iron. This immense manufacture is almost entirely the growth of the last fifteen years.—See Dr WATT'S *Statistics of Glasgow, Lanarkshire*, p. 57, a most curious and valuable work.

of those invaluable elements of manufacturing greatness that the fabrics of Yorkshire, Lancashire, and South Wales in the southern, and Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire in the northern division of Great Britain, are to be ascribed ; their astonishing present magnitude demonstrates the vast influence of these subterraneous treasures, when applied to their destined purpose by human knowledge and industry. The approach to this mineral region is indicated by its prodigious population, its boundless wealth, its provinces of houses ; but with them are connected, as usual in human affairs, the prolific seeds of evil. Agriculture, overlooked for the gambling speculations of commerce, is generally neglected ; tall chimneys everywhere attest the frequent steam-engine ; the sky is loaded with sulphurous clouds ; pallid countenances and diminutive forms indicate the long-continued influence of unhealthy employments : the jails are loaded with criminals, the spirit-cellars with profligates : female virtue and usefulness are lost amidst the fatal precocity of labour. Wealth accumulates and men decay ; and the universal thirst for excitement and riches spreads corruption, and lays the foundation of ruin.*

The commerce and manufactures of Great Britain, which, under the influence of the war, and of these causes, have now risen to such an astonishing pitch of

* The following list exhibits the population of the principal cities in the empire, according to the census of 1841. Their magnitude may well excite astonishment, and can be accounted for only from the vast increase of commerce and manufactures. In 1792 London was not half, many of the other cities not a fourth, of their present size.

Population of the chief Cities and Towns in England and Scotland in 1841.

The Metropolis,	1,873,677	Newcastle-on-Tyne,	49,860
Manchester, Salford, and suburbs,	296,163	Hull,	41,629
Liverpool,	286,487	York city,	28,842
Birmingham and suburbs, .	182,922	Edinburgh city, (including North and South Leith),	166,450
Leeds,	152,054	Glasgow city and suburbs, .	274,556
Bristol,	122,296	Paisley,	60,487
Plymouth,	80,059	Aberdeen,	64,767
Sheffield,	68,186	Dundee,	62,794
Rochdale, (part of parish), .	67,889	Greenock,	36,936
Norwich,	62,344		

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19.
Prodigious
growth of
the manu-
factures and
commerce
of Britain.

greatness, were in 1792, when the contest commenced, comparatively speaking in a state of infancy. If the exports, imports, and shipping of three years ending with 5th January 1792, be compared with what they had respectively reached fifty years afterwards, they appear each to have tripled; a prodigious increase, and amply explaining the duplication of population during the same period.* It may safely be affirmed, that this half-century exhibits a progress in commerce and opulence in the British empire which is unparalleled in the history of mankind. But it is impossible now to contemplate it without the deepest apprehension. The social balance has become overloaded on the side of urban labour. An amount of population has now come to depend on the precarious and fluctuating interests of commerce, which exceeds anything yet witnessed among men, and has induced that unstable equilibrium in the state, which threatens, in the event of any serious external disasters or internal convulsions, the most dreadful calamities.

20.
And still
greater ex-
tent of its
agriculture.

Those who are accustomed to regard foreign commerce and manufactures as the main source of the wealth and grandeur of Great Britain, will be surprised to learn that, not only in 1793, when the war broke out, but even at this time, notwithstanding the prodigious increase they have since undergone, these sources of opulence bear but a small proportion to that which is derived from the culti-

* Table showing the Exports, Imports, and Shipping of Great Britain in 1789, 1790, 1791, and 1839, 1840, 1841, respectively.

Year.	Imports. Declared Value.	Exports. Official Value.	De-clared Value of Exports.	Tons British Shipping.
1789	£18,372,149	£22,147,361	£29,346,391	1,272,114
1790	18,921,347	23,021,472	29,862,112	1,321,231
1791	19,659,858	24,904,851	29,671,462	1,363,483
1839	62,004,000	110,198,716	53,233,580	3,000,000
1840	67,432,964	116,479,678	51,406,430	3,512,480
1841	64,377,362	116,903,668	51,634,523	3,619,850

Parl. Papers, 1843; and MR ADDINGTON'S *Finance Resolutions*, 1801; *Parl. Hist.* XXXV. 1563.

vation of the soil. The total amount of British manufactures annually produced is in value about £180,000,000, of which only £47,000,000 is (1840) taken off by the whole external trade of the world put together, while no less than 133,000,000 is consumed in the home market; and of the foreign consumption, fully a third is absorbed by the British colonies in different parts of the world. So that the home and colonial trade is to the whole foreign, put together, as 5 to 1.* And, while the total produce of manufactures is £180,000,000 annually, and of mines and minerals £13,776,000, the amount of agricultural produce annually extracted from the soil is not less than £300,000,000; or above a half more than the whole manufactures and mines put together.

In truth, though less noticed than the dazzling splendour of commercial greatness, the marvel of British agriculture exceeds all other marvels in this land of wonders. Perhaps there never was a country in which the cultivation of the soil has been exposed to so severe a strain as that of Great Britain has been for the last half-century, or in which it has so wonderfully kept pace, during the whole period, with the wants of the community. Not only has it been called upon, in an old state, with a territory

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21.
Marvels of
British
agriculture.

* MANUFACTURES AND MINES IN 1840.

For manufacturing exportation,	.	.	.	£47,257,766
For home markets,	.	.	.	133,500,000

Total manufactures,	.	.	.	£180,757,766
Mines and minerals,	.	.	.	13,776,286

Manufactures and Mines,	.	.	.	£194,534,052
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AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE.

19,135,000 arable acres, at £7 each,	.	.	.	£133,945,000
27,000,000 acres of meadows, at £6 each,	.	.	.	162,000,000
15,000,000 do. of wastes,	.	.	.	5,000,000

				£300,945,000
Exports of manufactures to British colonies,	.	.	.	16,500,000
Home consumption,	.	.	.	133,500,000

Home and colonial,	.	.	.	£150,000,000
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All the rest of the world,	.	.	.	30,757,766
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—See SPACKMAN'S *Stat. Tables for 1842*, p. 45 (a most useful work); and PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, i. 177.

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narrow and wholly appropriated, to keep pace with an increase of population, which has doubled in that time, and an increase of horses and the wants of luxury, which have advanced in a still greater proportion, but it has been exposed to the constant abstraction of capital and enterprise into the more tempting transactions of commerce and manufactures, then advancing in the same community with unheard-of rapidity. Yet in spite of this constant and increasing strain upon its produce, and abstraction of the capital which should sustain it, the agriculture of the British Islands has fully kept pace with the wants of the community, and until the late unprecedented occurrence of *five* bad harvests in succession, the average amount of foreign grain imported was steadily diminishing, and at length had become a perfect trifle.* And while a deluded generation was believing the doctrine, that population in the later stages of society has a tendency to increase faster than food can be provided for it, Nature was silently, in that very community, rebuking their error, and furnishing decisive demonstration of its fallacy. For at the time that, in the basin of the Mississippi, and surrounded by the virgin riches of the Far-West, seven cultivators existed for one manufacturer, on the narrow territory and amidst the crowded population of Britain one agriculturist was raising food sufficient for three manufacturers; in other words, in the old and dense community, the power of labour in producing food for other classes of society was ONE-AND-TWENTY TIMES what it was in the young and advancing one.†

* Annual Average of Foreign grain imported into Great Britain—

1801 to 1810,	600,946 quarters.
1811 to 1820,	458,578 ...
1821 to 1830,	534,992 ...
1831 to 1835,	398,509 ...
1836 to 1840, ‡	1,992,548 ...

-PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, i. 146; and *Parl. Tables*, ix. 548.

† Agriculturists beyond the Alleghany Mountains in America, 2,092,250

All other classes, 287,751

Or about 7 to 1.

‡ Five bad years in succession.

The government of Great Britain, which was supposed by theoretical observers to have been, anterior to the great change of 1832, a mixed constitution, in which the crown, the nobles, and the commons mutually checked and counteracted each other, was in reality an aristocracy, having a sovereign for the executive, disguised under the popular forms of a republic. The system of separate powers controlling and limiting each other sounds well in theory, but in practice it induces, when really, and not in form merely, carried into effect, an immediate stoppage of the most important functions of government. England had enough of it from 1832 to 1840. But although the practical direction of affairs was, by the old constitution, generally vested in the majority of the nobles, yet was the spirit of the country so essentially democratic, and so large the intermixture of popular institutions which had grown up under the monarchy, that a strong check existed on the power of the magnates, which in periods of excitement became irresistible, and always operated as a powerful restraint on

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22.

Old constitution of
Great Britain.

Agriculturists all over America,	3,717,756
All other classes,	1,078,680
Or about $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 1.	
Agricultural families in Great Britain in 1831, .	961,134
All other classes,	2,453,041
	<hr/>
	3,414,175

Or about 1 agriculturist to $2\frac{3}{4}$ other classes. By the census of 1841, the proportion of agriculturists to other classes is about 1 to 7, the numbers being as follows:—

	Engaged in Agriculture.	Consumers dependent on Agriculture.	Consumers dependent on Manufactures and Manufacturers.
England, .	1,157,816	7,540,543	6,296,779
Wales, .	103,632	650,748	157,223
Scotland, .	229,337	1,159,259	1,231,588
Ireland, .	1,844,696	4,158,801	2,171,627
Islands, .	8,493	95,564	19,983
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	3,343,974	13,604,915	9,877,200
			<hr/>
			13,604,915

Total producers of food,	} 3,343,974	Consumers of food, 23,482,115

—See PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation*, i. 59; and *Census* of 1841; and *American Census* of 1841.

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the abuses into which that form of government has a tendency to run. The close or nomination boroughs, long so much the object of invective, had become, situated as the British empire was, not the least valuable part of its constitution ; for they furnished an inlet to commercial and colonial wealth, which practically represented their interests, and prevented the selfish views of the dominant island from resulting in excessive oppression on the unrepresented distant dependencies. They furnished a ready entrance to talent which might disdain the arts requisite to win the suffrages of a numerous constituency, and they admitted a body of men into the legislature who had the invaluable quality of independence, for many of them had purchased their seats. A legislature entirely composed of such men would be highly objectionable, because it would be destitute of the element of popular representation ; but a certain number was an invaluable addition to an assembly ruling a vast multitude of distant dependencies, with interests adverse to those of the dominant people in the heart of the empire : and time will show whether anything has been gained by subjecting the whole legislature to the direct nomination of numbers in the British Islands.

23.
Aspect of
society in
the British
Islands at
this period.

Society existed in Great Britain, when the war commenced, in a form which had never before been witnessed since the beginning of the world, and which may well arrest attention ; for it never will be seen in it again. Manufactures and commerce, though considerable and increasing, were as nothing to what they have since become : not only did the strength of the state consist, as it still does, in the land, but the national feelings and customs were formed by its attachments. Commercial fabrics existed in many quarters ; numerous towns were rising on all sides ; but their influence was felt rather in the quickened sale of produce, and the stimulus given to general wealth and agricultural industry, than in any change they had effected in the national habits or dispositions. The heart of the nation was still in the country ;

and a variety of circumstances had given it a peculiar and delightful character. The long security from foreign warfare or domestic dissension ; the necessity of cultivating the yeomanry with a view to parliamentary influence ; the passion for field sports, which seems indelible in the Anglo-Saxon blood, had combined to make the nobles and landholders almost universally reside upon their estates. The principal ones had houses in London or Edinburgh, but their homes were in the country. Their libraries, their pictures, their palaces, their tombs, their hearts were there. Thus they were identified in feeling, interest, and amusements with the rural population ; and a feeling had grown up between them akin to that which subsisted in La Vendée between the seigneurs and peasants. They followed the same hounds, joined in the same festivities, sat in the same church, were carried at last to the same churchyard. One common faith united the rich and the poor. The graceful steeple of the parish church frequently arose from amidst the oaks of the nobleman's park, and his younger brother held the living. The noble pastor, often highly educated, visited the poor in their affliction ; he joined the rich in their festivity ; he was the link which united the extremes of society, too apt in the progress of opulence to be severed from each other. The counties were covered with manor-houses, the fields with cottages ; fearless poverty spread into nature ; haughty opulence sought to improve its beauties. The abundance of enclosures and hedgerow timber gave the country the appearance of a continued forest ; but the frequent green meadow, trim garden, flowering orchard, and ornamented cottage, bespoke the abode of happy and contented man.

A monarch was on the throne peculiarly fitted for the stormy period in which his lot had been cast. With little education, and no great acquired information, George III. had yet that solid judgment, that native sagacity, which so often compensates all other deficiencies, and for the want of which all the most laboured accomplishments can

24.
Great firm-
ness of
George III.

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seldom afford any compensation. Simple in his tastes, correct and decorous in his manners, essentially patriotic in his affections, he faithfully represented the feelings of the best part of the British people. Though he frequently, from the effects of external disaster or internal faction, became, for a time, the object of vehement obloquy to the noisy multitude, yet these ebullitions were transient, and he never failed, ere long, to regain that favour with the unthinking many which he never lost with the thinking few. He was a more valuable king of England, at that period, than one with more shining talents or extensive knowledge might have been ; for he was in less danger of being swept away by philosophical theories of which he was ignorant, or delusions which arose out of views that he did not possess. His temper was obstinate ; but, directed by good sense, this peculiarity seldom led him into error, and often was productive of incalculable advantage. He was the very opposite of Louis XVI.; without his philosophic speculation, with less unforeseeing philanthropy, he had incomparably more firmness and resolution.*

25.
State of
Great Bri-
tain in 1792.

Nine years of peace had enabled Great Britain to recover, in a great degree, the losses and exhaustion of the American War. If she had lost one empire in the Western, she had gained another in the Eastern world. The wealth of India began to pour into her bosom ; and a little island in the west of Europe already exercised a sway over realms more extensive than the arms of Rome had reduced to subjection. A vast revenue, amounting to

* An eminent instance of this had recently occurred. When London was in flames during the dreadful riots of Lord George Gordon in 1780, and the Cabinet was assembled to deliberate on what should be done, an order to the military to fire upon the people, if in the act of breaking into or destroying, was made out ; but the Lord-Chancellor and other cabinet ministers declined to sign it, from doubts as to its legality. Upon this the King asked the Attorney-general (Wedderburn) "if the order was agreeable to the law of England." The Attorney replied that it was. "Give me the papers," cried the monarch, "and I will sign it myself." He did so ; the troops immediately acted upon it, and in six hours the devastation was at an end. But George III. was ready in his

£7,000,000 annually, was already derived from her Indian possessions ; and, although nearly the whole of this great sum was absorbed in their costly establishment, yet her rulers already looked forward with confident hope to the period, now never likely to be realised, when the empire of Hindostan, instead of being as heretofore a burden, should be a source of revenue to the ruling state, and the wealth of India really become that mine of gold to Britain, which it had long proved to numbers of her children. Her national debt, amounting to £244,000,000, and occasioning an annual charge of £9,317,000 was indeed a severe burden upon the industry of the people ; and the taxes, though light in comparison of what have been imposed in later times, were still felt as oppressive. But, nevertheless, the resources of the state had augmented to an extraordinary degree during the repose which had prevailed since the conclusion of the former contest.¹

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¹ Ann Reg.
xxxiii. 153.

Commerce, agriculture and manufactures had rapidly increased ; the trade with the independent States of North America had been found to exceed what had been enjoyed with them when they were in a state of colonial dependence ; and the incessant exertions of every individual to better his condition had produced a surprising effect upon the accumulation of capital and the state of public credit. The Three per Cents, from 57, at the close of the war, had risen to 90 ; and the overflowing wealth of the capital was already finding its way into the most circuitous foreign trades, and hazardous distant investments. The national revenue amounted to £16,000,000, and the army included 32,000 soldiers in the British Isles in the pay of

26.
Revenues,
and military
and naval
forces.

riding-school, if tranquillity had not been restored, to have ridden at the head of his Guards into his burning capital.—WRAXALL'S *Memoirs*, i. 356, 357. The same account is given in substance by Lord Campbell in his *Life of Lord Loughborough*—an impartial, though rather unwilling, witness to the merits of George III. or Lord Loughborough. His Majesty, on the Attorney-general's answer, said, that "this had been decidedly his opinion, though he would not previously venture to express it ; but that now, as supreme magistrate, he would see it carried into effect. The requisite orders were issued to the troops, and the conflagrations were stopped."—*Lives of the Chancellors*, vi. 138.

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Government, besides an equal force in the East Indies maintained by the Company, and thirty-six regiments of yeomanry. But these forces were rapidly augmented after the commencement of the war, and before 1796 the regular army of Britain amounted to two hundred and six thousand men, including forty-two thousand militia. More than half of this force, however, was required for the service of the colonies; and experience has proved, that Britain can never collect much above forty thousand men at any one point on the continent of Europe. The real strength of England consisted in her inexhaustible wealth, in the public spirit and energy of her people, in the moral influence of centuries of glory, and in a fleet of a hundred and fifty ships of the line, which gave her the undisputed command of the seas.^{1*}

¹ *Jom. i. 250.*
Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 124.
Report of
Finance
Committee,
May 10,
1791. State
Papers.
James. i.
Table i.
App. 247.

27.

Depression
in the na-
tional spirit,
and abuses
in the army.

But, though abounding in all the resources, England, at this period, had little of the moral strength so necessary in war. During the disastrous contest in America, the national glory had been seriously tarnished. Two large armies had laid down their arms to the enemy; and even the ancient supremacy of the seas seemed to be in hazard, when the combined fleets of France and Spain rode triumphant in the British Channel. The glorious defence of Gibraltar had alone maintained the ancient celebrity of the English land forces; the splendid victory of the 12th April, under Rodney, vindicated the long-

* The British Navy on 5th January 1792 contained—

	Fit for Service.	Old and Guard Ships.	Total.
Line,	115	38	153
Frigates,	84	5	89

JAMES'S Naval History. I. Appendix, 247.

The European powers had the following naval establishments at this time :—

	Line.		Line.
England, . . .	153	Holland, . . .	28
France, . . .	86	Denmark, . . .	24
Spain, . . .	68	Portugal, . . .	13
Russia, . . .	36	Turkey, Naples, &c.	13

Abstract—

British	.	153	.
Other Powers,	.	268	.

Balance against England, 115

established prowess of her seamen. Nor was either the army or the navy in such a state as to render any early success probable in any new contest. Abuses of the most flagrant description existed in every department of the land forces ; young men were appointed to commissions by purchase, or in consequence of parliamentary influence, without any knowledge of their profession ; promotion was seldom awarded to real merit ; and no academies or schools were in existence to teach the inexperienced officer even the rudiments of the military art.* It was by slow degrees, and in the school of adversity, that the British army was improved, and her commanders rendered capable of turning to good account that undaunted courage, which in every age has formed the honourable characteristic of the British people.¹

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¹ Jom. i.
251.

England, like the other monarchies of Europe, had slumbered on, contented, prosperous, and for the most part inglorious, during the eighteenth century. The bright aurora with which it was ushered in, in the days of Eugene and Marlborough, had afforded no true promise of the general character of the political era which followed. The fierce passions, the heart-stirring feelings, the enduring energy of the civil wars, had passed into the page of history, and, with the licentious profligacy of Charles II., were pictured only in contemporary annals, or the reflective mirror of the national theatre. "The period," says Mackintosh, "from the English to the French Revolution was the golden age of authentic history. Governments were secure : nations tranquil, improvement rapid, manners mild, beyond the example of any former age. The English nation, which possessed the greatest of all human blessings, a wisely-constructed popular government, necessarily enjoyed the largest share of every other benefit.

28.

Slumber of
the national
mind during
the eighteenth
century.

* To such a length was this system carried, that it was not unusual for infants to obtain commissions in the cradle, and draw pay regularly for sixteen years before they joined their corps. The well-known answer when a loud noise was heard in a nursery in Scotland, "Oh, it's only the *Major roaring for his parritch* !" shows how common this abuse had become in families of influence.

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The tranquillity of that fortunate period was not disturbed by any of those calamitous or even extraordinary events which excite the imagination and inflame the passions.* The administration of Chatham, and the victories of Frederick, alone cast a fleeting lustre over the general monotony of the period ; but even their glories were the result of the ambition of kings or the rivalry of cabinets, and partook not of the profound interest of the theological contests which had preceded, or the political struggles which followed them. The strife of religion had ceased, that of equality had not commenced ; between the two there intervened a long repose of a hundred years, illustrated by few glories, stained by still fewer crimes, during which the fervour springing from the former great convulsion insensibly expired, and the seeds destined to produce a still fiercer collision were gradually ripening to maturity.

29.
Erroneous
views of phi-
losophers on
the tendency
of human
affairs.

It was a generally received opinion among the philosophers and statesmen of this period, that society had at length assumed a settled and permanent form, that all the great causes of discord had been extinguished, and that history would never again have to commemorate the vehement contentions and tragic incidents which had arisen in an early period of human existence. Adam Smith observed, that while the population of America was doubling every five-and-twenty years, that of Europe was slumbering on with an increase which would hardly arrive at the same result in five hundred : while Gibbon lamented that the period of interesting incident was past, and that the modern historian would never again have to record the moving events and dismal catastrophes of ancient story. Such were the anticipations of the greatest men of the age, on the verge of a period destined to present the tyranny of Robespierre, the constancy of Pitt, and the triumphs of Nelson ; when the human race, mowed down by the merciless sword of Napoleon, was

* Mackintosh's Works, ii. 512.

to spring up again with an elasticity almost equalling the far-famed rapidity of Transatlantic increase.*

The opinions of the country, as might have been expected on so great an event, were divided on the French Revolution. The young, the ardent, the philosophical, were sanguine in their expectations of its success ; a new era seemed to have dawned upon the world ; from the rise of freedom in that great empire, the fetters of slavery, and the bonds of superstition, appeared to be dropping from the hands of the human race. It was not merely the factious, the restless, and the ambitious, who entertained these opinions ; they were shared by many of the best and wisest of men ; and in England it might with truth be said, as an eloquent historian has observed of Europe in general,¹ that the friends of the French Revolution comprised at that period the most enlightened and generous of the community. It was not then that its tendency was, or could be, generally perceived. But though the highly educated classes generally inclined to these opinions, those entertaining extreme views were comparatively few in number. The vast majority of the population was decidedly loyal ; in the country it was almost invariably so. The confirmed democrats in Great Britain at that period were by no means numerous. They were estimated by Mr Burke, who was noways inclined to diminish the dangers of the time, at eighty thousand.²

But if the changes in France were regarded with favour by one, they were looked on with utter horror by another class of the community. The majority of the aristocratic body, all the adherents of the church, all the holders of office under the monarchy, in general the great bulk of the opulent ranks of society, beheld them with apprehension or aversion. Many of those who had life

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30.

Views of the
Whigs on
the Revolution.

¹ Bot. i. 70.

²Burke, viii.
140, 141.

31.

And of the
Tories.

* The population of Prussia is now doubling in 26 ; that of Britain in 52 ; that of Austria in 69 ; that of France in 105 ; that of Russia in 66 years.—DUPIN, *Forces Com. de France*, i. 36.

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before them, rejoiced in the changes which society seemed about to undergo ; those who had passed through it, trembled at their approach : those who had nothing to lose, had no fears of the consequences of innovation ; those who had acquired, or inherited much, were justly apprehensive that they would be the first objects of spoliation. Such were the general divisions of opinion prevalent in Britain ; but of course these opinions were modified by the temper or habits of thought in different individuals, and the partisans of innovation numbered among their ranks many of the most ancient and illustrious noble families. There will always be found a certain portion, generally a small minority, of the aristocracy, who from the various motives of ambition, jealousy, envy, delusion, discontent, or insolvency, will break off from the order to which they belong, and put themselves at the head of any popular movement. In them the most dangerous, because the most influential, and least suspected, leaders of it are to be found.

32.
Early history of Mr Fox.

At the head of the first party was Mr Fox, the eloquent and illustrious champion of freedom in every part of the world. Descended of a noble family, which combined political distinction with literary talent, he seemed born to wield both the mighty levers which move mankind. He was the third son of Henry Fox, the first Lord Holland, whose great talents raised him to the situation of Secretary of State for the War Department during the Seven Years' War ; and who was long the antagonist of Mr Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham. His father, who was a man of refined and cultivated taste, as well as forensic ability, took infinite pains with the education of young Fox, whose great talents were soon conspicuous. Unfortunately his excessive indulgence to his son gave too early a development to his dissipated propensities, which were as precocious as his power of acquiring languages ; and when he set out on his travels at the age of twenty, he was already a deep gamester, an experienced

rake, and excessively expensive in his dress and habits. Distinction was his constant passion: in youth he sought it by elegance in attire or extravagance in expenditure; in maturer years by oratorical power and the lead of a party. He returned from the Continent in 1767 deeply in debt, a thorough libertine, but without any diminution of his elegant tastes or natural powers.* In 1768 he entered parliament as member for Medhurst in Sussex, and made his first speech on a petition of the celebrated democrat Wilkes. His great powers of speaking soon made themselves conspicuous, and early attracted the notice of the author of Junius, who, in his celebrated Letters, warmly praised the rising orator. Down to 1772, he voted in general with ministers, though his independent disposition was on many occasions conspicuous; but in that year he united himself to the Opposition, of which he soon became the acknowledged leader. This was confirmed by the death of his father in 1774, which set him free from all ministerial ties; and by his ardent admiration of Mr Burke, whom he justly denominated the finest genius of the eighteenth century, and with whom he combated Lord North and the Tory ministry through the whole course of the American War.¹

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He inherited the love of liberty which had long been hereditary in his race, and, by the impetuous torrent of his eloquence, long maintained his place as leader of the Opposition of the British empire. His talents for debate were of the very highest order; and in the impassioned energy with which he delivered his opinions, he never was exceeded by any orator in the British parliament. Though he was a refined classical scholar, and well acquainted with the poets of antiquity, as well as those of modern times, yet he was too indolent to have acquired extensive erudition, and was often indebted, like Mira-

¹ Trotter's
Life of Fox,
i. 84. Biog.
Univ. xv.
403 (Fox.)

33.
His charac-
ter as a
statesman
and orator.

* His debts amounted to the enormous sum of £140,000; and he had travelled with a mistress whose presence scandalised even Gibbon, at Lausanne, not the most fastidious of men in such particulars.

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beau, for the facts connected with the subjects of discussion rather to the industry of his friends than to his own research. Yet no one could make a more skilful use of the information with which he was furnished, or which he gathered in the course of debate ; or descant with more originality on a subject apparently exhausted by the efforts of others. Profuse, dissipated, and irregular in private life, he had none of the weight, ever so powerful in England, which arises from the purity of personal character ; but, amidst all his frailties, the warmth of his heart and generosity of his disposition secured him the ardent attachment of a numerous body of private friends, embracing a large proportion of the ablest men and oldest families in the state ; while his vehement and impassioned oratory readily commanded the admiration of that numerous class who longed after more popular government, or the general license of a revolution. But his intellect was not equal to his eloquence ; his judgment was inferior to his debating powers. Mr Gibbon observed, that “ his inmost soul was tinged with democracy ; ”¹ and such in truth was his character. He saw no danger to liberty but in the power of the Crown : the violence of the people never occurred to him as likely to put it in peril. Sincere in his attachment to freedom, he advocated, during the best part of his life, a political system which was entailing upon the country where it arose the most degrading bondage ; passionately devoted to the cause of liberty, he continued constant in his admiration of those frantic innovations which, more than the coalition of kings, against which the thunders of his eloquence were directed, rendered impossible its duration in the first of European monarchies.

¹ Miscellane-
ous
Works, i.
386.

34.
Mr Pitt.
His early
biography.

Mr Pitt was the leader of the second party, which, at the commencement of the French Revolution, was in the full possession of government, and supported by a decided majority in both Houses of Parliament. He was born at Hayes in Kent, on the 28th May 1759, the second son

of William first Earl of Chatham. His mother, a lady of great talents and uncommon strength of understanding, was Lady Hester, only daughter of Richard Grenville, Esq., and Countess Temple. At first young Pitt's constitution was uncommonly feeble, insomuch that great fears were entertained that he could not be reared to maturity; but notwithstanding this disadvantage, his diligence and ability were such that, at the age of fourteen, when he was sent to Cambridge, his proficiency in Greek and Latin was truly extraordinary. By Lord Chatham's desire, Thucydides was the first Greek book he read after coming to college; and such was the facility he had already acquired in that difficult language, that he could read six or seven pages he had never previously seen, without more than two or three mistakes. With such penetration did he seize the meaning of this great writer, and so rapidly imbibe his ideas, that it was observed of him at the time by his preceptor, "that he never seemed to learn, but only to recollect." At this period, and during all the time he remained at college, his conduct was correct, his conversation easy, his application ceaseless. Lord Chatham had from the first conversed with him on every subject: the true system of education, but one which is hardly safe except in a parent's hand. His knowledge of Scripture was extensive and accurate, insomuch that long after, and when immersed in political life, he could distinguish at once a quotation from the Bible from one from the Apocrypha.¹

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After being some years at college, he read habitually the orators and historians of antiquity; particularly Livy, Thucydides, and Sallust. It was his favourite occupation to compare opposite speeches upon the same subject, and to examine how each speaker managed his own side of the question, and obviated or answered the reasoning of his opponent. When alone, he dwelt for hours upon striking passages of these historians and orators, and was particularly captivated by their inimitable brevity and

¹ Tomline's
Life of Pitt,
i. 1, 4.

35.
His youth,
and studies
at college.

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force of expression. He had little turn for the minute details of grammar ; could never be induced to construe word by word, or attend to the rules of syntax : but read several sentences straight on, and then rendered them at once into free English, to the great astonishment and no small annoyance of his masters. He was set on things, not words. All his leisure hours were devoted to translating the finest passages of the classic authors into English : the most useful, as the opposite one of turning English into Greek or Latin is the most useless, occupation which can be given to youth.* With equal diligence he applied to mathematics, and displayed such skill in the solution of problems, that it was evident he would have reached the very highest eminence in science, if fortune had not thrown him into public life. With not less avidity he studied the great poets and authors of his own country, and when he left college at the age of twenty-one, there were few of the historical or literary writers of Great Britain with whom he was unacquainted. But these calm studies were soon interrupted : in spring 1780 he became resident in Lincoln's Inn, and regularly attended Westminster Hall ; and in January 1781 he was introduced into Parliament for the burgh of Appleby. Even before he appeared in public life, his great father had anticipated his future distinction, and dwelt on the prospect with fond and touching enthusiasm.^{1†}

Modern history has hardly so great a character to exhibit. Inheriting from his father, the first Lord Chat-

¹ Tomline's
Life of Pitt,
i. 9, 23.

* In this practice he followed the example and precept of Cicero. "Postea mihi placuit, eoque sum usus adolescens, ut summorum oratorum Græcas orationes explicarem. Quibus lectis hoc assequabar, ut cum ea quæ legerem Græcè Latine redderem, non solum optimis verbis uterer, et tamen usitatis, sed etiam exprimerem quædam verba imitando quæ nova nostris essent, dummodo essent idonea." *De Oratore*, lib. i. cap. 34. Cicero never thought of translating Latin *into* Greek; and, had he done so, he never would have rivalled the Philippics, and certainly never composed the orations against Catiline. He is a bold man who, on the education of an orator, gainsays the united authority and disregards the similar practice of Cicero and Pitt.

† The last letter of Lord Chatham to Mr Pitt began in these terms : "How can I employ my reviving pen so well as in addressing a few lines to the *hope*

ham, a patriotic and truly British spirit, he early imbibed, at the same time, a strong attachment to those liberal principles on which the administration of that illustrious man was founded, and which had given to his government such general and deserved popularity. The first part of his career was chiefly remarkable for these sentiments, and his great abilities, from the very outset, gave him a distinguished place in Parliament. But circumstances soon arose which called forth the latent powers of his mind, and exhibited in full lustre the indomitable firmness of his character. Mr Fox and Lord North had formed a coalition, after their chief cause of discord had been extinguished by the termination of the American War; and, strong in the possession of an apparently invincible majority in the Lower House, had ventured upon the bold measure of bringing in a bill which proposed to take from the East India Company the government of Hindostan, and vest it in certain commissioners, to be appointed, not by the Crown, but by the House of Commons. It is impossible to doubt that such a change, if carried into execution, would have subverted the constitution, by the establishment of an *imperium in imperio*, possessed of greater authority and influence than the executive. But this catastrophe was averted by the firmness and sagacity of the monarch who then held the British sceptre. Perceiving at once the full extent of the danger; well aware, in the emphatic words of Lord Thurlow, “that this bill, if carried, would take the crown from the King’s head, and place it on that of Mr Fox,”¹ he instantly resolved to interpose his influence to prevent it from passing into a law, and resolutely declared his determination, if necessary, to retire to Hanover, rather than continue in Britain the mere tool of a parliamentary oligarchy. By his

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36.

His early
difficulties
as a states-
man.¹ Parl. Hist.
xxiv. 125.

and comfort of my life, my dear William?”—and ends, “So, with best compliments to Aristotle, Homer, Thucydides, Xenophon, not forgetting Locke, Grotius, and the Law of Nations, adieu, my dearest William. Your most affectionate father, CHATHAM.”—LORD CHATHAM to Mr PITT. September 22, 1777; TOMLINE’S *Life of Pitt*, i. 23.

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exertions the bill, after having passed the Commons by a great majority, was thrown out, by a slender majority of eight, in the House of Lords ; and this led to the immediate resignation of the Coalition Ministry. The King instantly sent for Mr Pitt, and, on the 12th January 1784, he took his seat in the House of Commons as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

37.
His character as a statesman, and arduous struggle he maintained.

Never did a more arduous struggle await a minister. The Opposition, led by the impetuous energy of Fox, aided by the experienced influence and admirable temper of Lord North, was possessed of a great majority in the Lower House, and treated at first with the utmost scorn this attempt on the part of a young man of six-and-twenty to dispossess them of the government. But it was soon evident that his talents were equal to the task, arduous and apparently hopeless though it was. Invincible in resolution, and yet cool in danger ; possessed of a moral courage which nothing could overcome ; fertile in resources, powerful in debate, eloquent in declamation—he exhibited a combination of great qualities, which for political contests never was excelled. A pure and irreproachable private character gave his opponents no weak side whereon to assail the panoply with which he was surrounded : a temperament, the energies of which were wholly concentrated on national objects, left him no room for selfish passion or private gratification. The ordinary vices of men of rank had no sway over him. Albeit noways insensible to their attractions, he was never the slave of women ; though he often drank largely, it was only to restore nature after the incessant exhaustion of his parliamentary efforts. Incorruptible, though wielding the wealth of England and the Indies ; fearless, though combating alone the whole weight of an apparently irresistible Opposition ; cool, though tried by all the means which could overcome the firmest patience ; cautious, when prudence counselled reserve—energetic and eloquent, when the moment for action had arrived ; he successfully

withstood the most formidable parliamentary majority which had appeared in English history since the Revolution, and ultimately remained victorious in the struggle. An administration thus tried in its infancy, was proof against any other danger in its maturer years. The intellect of its head clearly and at once perceived both the peril of the French revolutionary principles, and the expedience of making no attempt by external means to check its progress; and, fortunately for the cause of freedom throughout the world, that great convulsion found the British government in the hands of one, alike friendly to the cause of liberty, and hostile to the excesses which so often lead to its subversion. An attentive observer of the progress of the Revolution, therefore, he cautiously abstained from any act which might involve England in hostility with its distracted neighbour; and, though strongly pressed in the outset to take a part in the struggle, he maintained a strict neutrality when the German armies had penetrated to the very heart of France, and the moment seemed to have arrived when it was possible to terminate, by a single hostile demonstration, the rivalry of four centuries.

Edmund Burke was the leader of a third party, composed of the old Whigs, who supported the principles of the English, but opposed those of the French Revolution. He was born in Arran Quay, Dublin, on January 12, 1730. His family was a very old one, and of Norman extraction, and originally bore the name of "de Burgh," of which *Burke* is only a corruption. His father was a respectable attorney, in extensive practice—so lucrative, indeed, that Edmund, though a younger son, received nearly £20,000 as a patrimony. His mother, by whom he was taught to read, and instructed in the rudiments of education, was a woman of a very cultivated understanding; a circumstance which almost invariably is the case with those who afterwards rise to great celebrity. In constitution he was at first weak, and his early proficiency

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38.
Mr Burke.
His character and early history.

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in learning was not remarkable; another peculiarity which is generally, though not always, observed in those destined to ultimate greatness, and which arises from their attention being early fixed on things, not words—on the latter of which a schoolboy's, on the former a man's celebrity depends. At the age of thirteen he was removed to the academy at Ballitore, in the county of Kildare, and there his great powers soon developed themselves. They consisted at first, not so much in brilliancy, as in steadiness of application, facility of comprehension, and strength of memory. The same characteristics distinguished his early writings and speeches, and it was not till late in life that his imagination shone forth with such lustre: a peculiarity common to him with Milton, Shakespeare, Bacon, and many other of the greatest poets and orators who ever existed. It is easily explained, if we reflect that a quick and fervent mind readily fans a flame from a few perishable materials; but a great one requires mighty and durable elements to warm it into a glow. “*Materia alitur, motibus excitatur, et urendo lucescit.*”¹ *

¹ Tacitus.
Prior's Life
of Burke, i.
2, 14.

39.
His first en-
trance into
life.

His studies early in life, like those of Gibbon and Johnson, were more varied than systematic, multifarious than profound; a system practised in Scotland and Ireland more than in England, but which, looking to the results in these three great men, would seem not to be the worst way of enlarging and strengthening the human mind. He went through college respectably, but with no extraordinary distinction—reading incessantly, but often poems and novels rather than the works of the Academic curriculum, dwelling much on the sublime passages of Shakespeare, Milton, and Young, and not unfrequently essaying his own powers in their career. He was destined for the bar, to which he was entered in 1747, in London; but before this period, the bent of his genius to historical and political subjects was very apparent, having

* “It is nourished by materials, excited by movements, and shines by burning.” —TACITUS.

been signally evinced in the debates of the Historical Society in Dublin College, of which he was a zealous member. After arriving in London, in 1750, to prosecute his legal studies, he found them wholly distasteful to his discursive genius, and, possessing an adequate independence, quitted the law for the more attractive paths of literature. He soon after published his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*; and in 1758, began to write the historical part of the *Annual Register*, which he superintended for many years. Little of the fire of the orator, however, or the depth of the philosopher, is to be found in these compositions; he was then only collecting the materials on which the immortal superstructure of his fame was afterwards to be reared. In 1765, he was, from the reputation he had acquired as a writer, appointed private secretary to Lord Rockingham; and soon after entered parliament as member for Wendover, in Buckinghamshire. Thenceforward his biography forms part of the history of England.¹

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¹ Prior's
Life of
Burke, i.
24, 139.

Mr Burke had long combated in the ranks of Opposition with Mr Fox, and the closest private friendship had cemented their political alliance; but, on the breaking out of the French Revolution, they embraced different views. Mr Fox warmly applauded its principles, and declared in the House of Commons, that "the new constitution of France was the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which had been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any age or country." Mr Burke, on the other hand, gifted with greater political sagacity and foresight, early exerted his talents to oppose the levelling principles which that convulsion had introduced; and his work on the French Revolution produced, perhaps, a greater impression on the public mind than any which has yet appeared in the world. It abounds in eloquent passages, profound wisdom, and discriminating talent; but, vast as its influence, and unbounded as its reputation were when it first appeared, its value was

40.
His views on
the French
Revolution.

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not fully understood till the progress of events had demonstrated the justice of its principles. Their division on this vital question for ever alienated these illustrious men from each other, and drew tears from both in the House of Commons; an emblem of the effects of this heart-stirring event upon the charities of private life, of the variance which it introduced into the bosom of families, and between friendships which "had stood the strain of a whole lifetime."¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 114,
136.

41.
Division be-
tween Mr
Burke and
Mr Fox on
the Cana-
dian con-
stitution.

The occasion on which this momentous separation took place, was in the debate on the new constitution proposed for the provinces of Canada, in 1791; a remarkable coincidence, when the subsequent events in that colony are taken into consideration, and the vehement strife between the monarchical and republican principles, of which it afterwards became the theatre. So strongly did both these illustrious statesmen, but especially Mr Burke, feel on the all-engrossing topic of the French Revolution, that they mutually introduced it into almost all the debates which took place in the House of Commons at that period; and it was especially the subject of vehement and impassioned declamation, on occasion of the debate on Mr Baker's motion relative to a war with Russia, and the first introduction of the Canada Government Bill,—subjects which not unnaturally led to consideration of the supposed tendency of the French Revolution with regard to the external relations and internal happiness of nations. From that time a rupture between these two great men was distinctly foreseen, both by their friends and the public. It was, in truth, unavoidable; and is to be regarded as the index to the schism which must ensue in every free community, on occasion of strong democratic excitement, between those who adhere to the landmarks of the past, and those who are willing to adventure on the dark sea of innovation. Still, however, the external appearances of friendship were maintained between them; they visited, though not

April 15,
1791.
April 3.

so frequently as in former years; and, on the 6th of May, when the Canada Bill was to be debated in committee, they not only walked to the House together, but Mr Fox treated Mr Burke, in a previous conversation, with confidence, and mentioned to him a political circumstance of some delicacy. But the feelings of the latter were too ardent to be restrained; the future, big with disaster, revealed itself so clearly to his view, that it obliterated the past, and overshadowed the present; and in the debate which followed on that night, these two illustrious men were for ever severed, and the popular party in Great Britain permanently rent in twain. The debates on this subject possess the highest interest. They not only embrace the most thrilling event in the biography of both, but they constitute an era in the history of Europe during its most eventful period. The destinies of civilisation hung upon their words.¹

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¹ Parl. Deb.
xxix. 362;
and Burke's
Speeches,
iv. 2, 3.

On the part of Mr Fox, it was urged on this occasion, and in the previous debate on the Russian armament—
 “Without entering into the question whether hereditary honours are in themselves an advantage or an evil, the point which the House has now to consider is, Whether there is anything in them so peculiarly advantageous as to incline us to introduce them into a country where they are unknown, and by such means distinguish Canada from all the other colonies of the New World? In countries where they make a part of the constitution, it is not wise to destroy them; but it is a very different matter to give them birth and life in a country where they at present do not exist. It is impossible to account for such an attempt, except on the principle that, as Canada was formerly a French colony, there might be an opportunity of reviving those titles of honour, the extinction of which some gentlemen so much deplore, and of reviving in the West that spirit of chivalry which has fallen into disgrace in a neighbouring country. Are those red and blue ribbons, which have lost their lustre in the Old World,

42.
Argument
of Mr Fox
for the
French Re-
volution.

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again to shine forth in the New ? What can be so absurd as to introduce hereditary honours in the New World, where they are so much the object of undisguised aversion ? The proposed upper chamber would be equally objectionable if the council were hereditary ; for such an assembly would be nothing more than a tool in the hands of the royal authority. Not less so is the clause for making provision for the Protestant clergy, by enacting that, in all grants by the crown of unappropriated lands, one-seventh should be given to them. What can be so monstrous as such a fundamental rule in a country where the great bulk of the people are Catholics ? Even if they were all Protestants, it would still be unsuitable ; how much more so, therefore, when the whole of the Protestants, such as they are, are much subdivided, and the large proportion of them are Presbyterians, dissenters, or subordinate sects.

“Feeble as my powers are in comparison with my honourable friend’s, whom I must call my master—for everything that I know in politics I owe to him—I should yet ever be ready to maintain my principles even against his superior eloquence. I will maintain that the rights of man, which he states as chimerical and visionary, are in fact the basis and foundation of every rational constitution, and even of the British constitution itself, as the statute-book abundantly proves ; for what is the original compact between king and people there recognised, but the recognition of the inherent rights of the people as men, which no prescription can supersede, and no accident remove or obliterate ? If these principles are dangerous to the constitution, they are the principles of my right honourable friend, from whom I learned them. During the American war we have together rejoiced at the success of a Washington, and mourned almost in tears for the fate of a Montgomery. From him I have learned that the revolt of a nation cannot be the result of incitement or encouragement, but

must have proceeded from provocation. Such was his doctrine when he said, with equal energy and emphasis, ‘that he could not draw a bill of indictment against a whole people.’ I grieve to find that he has since learned to draw such an indictment, and to crown it with all the technical epithets which disgrace our statue-book, such as—false, malicious, wicked, by the instigation of the devil, or not having the fear of God before your eyes. Taught by my right honourable friend, that no revolt of a nation can spring except from provocation, I could not help feeling joy, ever since the constitution of France was founded on the rights of man—the basis on which the British constitution itself is rested. To vilify it, is neither more nor less than to libel the British constitution, and no book my right honourable friend can write, how able soever, no speech he can deliver, how eloquent soever, can induce me to change or abandon that opinion.

“I was formerly the strenuous advocate for the balance of power, when France was that intriguing restless nation which she had formerly proved. Now that the situation of France is altered, and that she has *erected a government from which neither insult nor injury can be apprehended by her neighbours*, I am extremely indifferent concerning the balance of power, and shall continue so till I see other nations combine the same power with the same principles of government as that of Old France. The true principle of the balance of power is not to keep every state exactly in its former condition, for that is impossible, but to prevent any one obtaining such an ascendancy as to be dangerous to the rest. No man can say that Russia will be the successor of France in this respect. Her extent of territory, scanty population, and limited revenue, *render her strength by no means formidable to us*: she is a power whom we can neither attack nor be attacked by; and is it with such a power we are to commence hostilities, in order to prop up the decaying Turkish empire, the overthrow of which would be more

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¹ Parl. Hist.
xxix. 107,
248, 379;
and Fox's
Speeches,
iv. 217, 204,
199.

43.
Argument
against it by
Mr Burke.

likely to prove advantageous than injurious to our interests? If we compare the present state of France with its past condition, both as respects the politics of Europe and the happiness of the people, even those who most detest the Revolution must see reason to rejoice in its effects. I cannot but applaud the government of France, in its internal tendency, as good, because it aims at the happiness of those who are subject to it. Different opinions may be entertained by different men as to the change of system that has taken place in that country; but I, for one, admire the new constitution of France, considered altogether, *as the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which has been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any age or country.*"¹

Mr Burke commenced his reply in a grave and solemn tone, befitting the solemnity of the occasion, and the rending asunder of ties which had endured unbroken for a quarter of a century. "The House," said he, "is now called upon to do a high and important act: to appoint a legislature for a distant people, and to affirm its own competency to the exercise of such a power. On what foundation is such an assumption to rest? Not, surely, on a vague conception of the rights of man; for, if such a doctrine is admitted, all that the House should do, is to call together the whole male inhabitants of Canada, and decide by a majority of their votes what form of government they are to receive. Setting aside so absurd a proposition, on what must this House found its competence to legislate at all on this matter? Clearly on the law of nations, and the acquired title so to legislate from the right of conquest, and a cessation of the rights of the old government, obtained by us in the treaty which confirmed it. These principles bind us to legislate in an equitable manner for the people of Canada, and they are in return to owe allegiance to us. The question then, is, On what basis is this new government to be formed? Are we to frame it according to the old light of the

English constitution, or by the glare of the new lanterns of the clubs at Paris and London ?

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“In determining this point, we are not to imitate the example of countries which have disregarded circumstances, torn asunder the bonds of society, and the ties of nature. To the constitution of America, doubtless, great attention is due, and it is of importance that the people of Canada should have nothing to envy in the constitution of a neighbouring state. But it is plain that they have not the same elements for the enjoyment of republican freedom which exist in the United States. The people of America have a constitution as well adapted to their character and circumstances as they could have ; but that character, and these circumstances, are essentially different from those of the French Canadians. The Americans have derived from their Anglo-Saxon descent a certain quantity of phlegm, of old English good-nature, that fits them better for a republican government. They had also a republican education ; their form of internal government was republican, and the principles and vices of it have been restrained by the beneficence of an overruling monarchy in this country. The formation of their constitution was preceded by a long war, in the course of which, by military discipline, they had learned order, submission, and command, and a regard for great men. They had learned what a King of Sparta had said was the great wisdom to be learned in his country—the art of commanding and obeying. They were trained to government by war, not by plots, murders, and assassinations.

“But what are we to say to the ancient Canadians, who, being the most numerous, are entitled to the greatest attention ? Are we to give them the French constitution—a constitution founded on principles diametrically opposite to ours, that could not assimilate with it in a single point ; as different from it as wisdom from folly, as vice from virtue, as the most opposite extremes in nature

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—a constitution founded on what was called the rights of man ? But let this constitution be examined by its practical effects in the French West India colonies. These, notwithstanding three disastrous wars, were most happy and flourishing till they heard of the rights of man. As soon as this system arrived among them, Pandora's box, replete with every mortal evil, seemed to fly open, hell itself to yawn, and every demon of mischief to overspread the face of the earth. Blacks rose against whites, whites against blacks, and each against the other, in murderous hostility ; subordination was destroyed, the bonds of society were torn asunder, and every man seemed to thirst for the blood of his neighbour.

'Black spirits and white, blue spirits and grey,
Mingle, mingle, mingle.'

All was toil and trouble, discord and blood, from the moment that this doctrine was promulgated among them ; and I verily believe that, wherever the rights of man are preached, such ever have been, and ever will be, the consequences. France, which had generously sent them the precious gift of the rights of man, did not like this image of herself reflected in her child, and sent out a body of troops, well-seasoned too with the rights of man, to restore order and obedience. These troops, as soon as they arrived, instructed as they were in the principles of government, felt themselves bound to become parties in the general rebellion, and, like most of their brethren at home, began asserting their rights by cutting off the head of their general.

"Dangerous doctrines are now encouraged in this country, and dreadful consequences may ensue from them, which it is my sole wish and ambition to avert, by strenuously supporting, in all its parts, the British constitution. The practice now is, with a certain party, to bestow upon all occasions the very highest praise upon the French constitution ; and it is immaterial whether this praise be

bestowed upon the constitution or the revolution of that country, since the latter has led directly to the former. To such a length has this infatuation been carried, that whoever now disapproves of the anarchy and confusion that have taken place in France, or does not subscribe to the opinion that order and liberty are to emanate from it, is forthwith stigmatised as an enemy to the British constitution ; a charge equally false, unfair, and calumnious. Doctrines of this sort are at all times dangerous, but they become doubly so when they are sanctioned by so great a name as that of the right honourable gentleman, who always puts his opinions in the clearest and most forcible light, and who has not hesitated, in this very debate, to call the French constitution the most glorious and stupendous fabric ever reared by human wisdom. That constitution, or revolution, whichever they choose to call it, can never serve the cause of liberty, but will inevitably promote tyranny, anarchy, and revolution. I have never entertained ideas of government different from those which I now maintain. Monarchy, I have always thought, is the basis of all good government ; and the nearer to monarchy any government approaches, the more perfect it is, and *vice versâ*. Those who are anxious to subvert the constitution are now, indeed, few in number in this country ; but can we be sure that this will always be the case, or that the time may never come, when, under the influence of scarcity or tumult, the monarchical institutions of the country may be threatened with overthrow ? Now, then, is the time to crush this diabolical spirit, and watch, with the greatest vigilance, the slightest attempt to subvert the British constitution.

“ It is perhaps indiscretion at any period, but especially at my advanced years, to provoke enemies, or give friends an occasion for desertion ; but if a firm and steady adherence to the British constitution should place me in such a dilemma, I will risk all, and with my last words exclaim,—Fly from the French constitution.”—

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"There is no loss of friends," said Mr Fox.—"Yes," said Mr Burke, "there is a loss of friends. I know the price of my conduct: I have done my duty at the price of him I love: our friendship is at an end. With my last breath I will earnestly entreat the two right honourable gentlemen who are the great rivals in this house, whether they hereafter move in the political hemisphere as two flaming meteors, or walk together like brethren hand in hand, to preserve and cherish the British constitution; to guard it against innovation, and save it from the dangers of theoretic alterations. It belongs to the infinite and unspeakable Power, the Deity, who with his arm hurls a comet, like a projectile, out of its course, and enables it to endure the sun's heat and the pitchy darkness of the chilly night, to aim at the formation of infinite perfection; to us, poor, weak, incapable mortals, there is no safe rule of conduct but experience."¹

¹ Parl. Deb.
xxix. 364,
366, 380,
388; and
Burke's
Speeches,
iv. 3, 8, 9,
17, 23.

45.

Their final
separation.

Mr Fox rose to reply, but tears at first choked his utterance, and they continued to roll down his cheeks even for some time after he had begun his speech. He commenced by expressing, in the strongest terms, his love and affection for Mr Burke, which had begun with his boyhood, and remained unbroken for five-and-twenty years; but by degrees the subject of their present division again rushed upon his mind, and although he called him his right honourable friend, yet it was evident to all that their friendship was at an end. A meeting of the Whigs was held to consider this great schism which had broken out in their party, and the following resolution appeared in their official journal, the *Morning Chronicle*, on the subject:—"The great and firm body of the Whigs of England, true to their principles, have decided on the dispute between Mr Fox and Mr Burke; and the former is declared to have maintained the pure doctrines by which they are bound together, and upon which they have invariably acted. The consequence is, that Mr Burke retires from parliament." Mr Burke, in alluding

May 12,
1791.

to this resolution, said, on the same night, that he knew he was excommunicated by one party, and that he was too old to seek another ; and though in his age he had been so unfortunate as to meet this disgrace, yet he disdained to make any recantation, and did not care to solicit the friendship of any man in the House, either on one side or the other.¹

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¹ Burke's
Speeches,
iv. 34, 38.

Nothing can be imagined more characteristic of both these illustrious men, and of the views of the parties of which they severally were the heads, than the speeches now given. On the one side are to be seen, warm affection, impassioned feeling, philanthropic ardour, vehemence of expression, worthy of the statesman who has been justly styled by no common man, "the most Demosthenian orator since the days of Demosthenes."² On the other, an ardent mind, a burning eloquence, a foresight guided by observation of the past, benevolence restrained by anticipation of the future. In the impetuosity of the latter, in support of the truths with which he was so deeply impressed, there is perhaps some reason to lament the undue asperity of indignant prophecy ; in the former, too great stress is laid upon political consistency under altered times. But time, the great test of truth, has now resolved the justice of the respective opinions thus eloquently advanced, and thrown its verdict, with decisive weight, into the scale with Mr Burke. There is, perhaps, not to be found in the whole history of human anticipation, a more signal instance of erroneous views than those advanced by Mr Fox, when he said that the French constitution was the most stupendous fabric of wisdom ever reared in any age or country ; that no danger was to be apprehended to the balance of power in Europe, now that France had obtained democratic institutions ; and that, if that great power was subverted, no peril was to be apprehended to European liberty from the strength or ambition of Russia. On the other hand, all must admit the extraordinary sagacity with which Mr Burke not

46.
Reflections
on the event.

² Mackin-
tosh.

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merely predicted the consequences to itself and to Europe, which necessarily would arise from the convulsions in France, but also pointed out so clearly that vital distinction between the Anglo-Saxon and the Gallic race on the shores of the St Lawrence, and the remarkable difference in their capacity to bear democratic institutions, which was destined not to produce its natural effects for half a century, and of which we are now only beginning to see the ultimate results.

47.
State of
Austria.

Unwearied in perseverance, firm in purpose, unchangeable in ambition, the Austrian government was the most formidable rival with which the French Republic had to anticipate a contest on the continent of Europe. This great empire, containing at that time nearly twenty-five millions of inhabitants, with a revenue of ninety million florins, or about £9,000,000 sterling, numbered the richest and most fertile districts of Europe among its provinces. The manufacturing wealth of Flanders, the agricultural riches of Lombardy, added not less to the pecuniary resources than did the energetic valour of the Hungarians, and the impetuous zeal of the Tyrolese, to the military strength of the empire. The possession of the Low Countries gave it an advanced post, formerly strongly fortified, immediately in contact with the French frontier; while the mountains of the Tyrol formed a vast fortress, garrisoned by an attached and warlike people, and placed at a salient angle between Germany and Italy, the certain theatre of future combats. Its armies, numerous and highly disciplined, had acquired immortal renown in the wars of Maria Theresa, and maintained a creditable place, under Daun and Laudohn, in the scientific campaigns with the Great Frederick. Its government, nominally a monarchy, but really an oligarchy, in the hands of the great nobles, about three hundred in number, possessed all that firmness and tenacity of purpose, and, at the same time, that selfish monopolising disposition,¹ by which aristo-

¹ Harl. i.
32.

cratic powers have always been distinguished ; and which, under unparalleled difficulties and disasters, brought them at last successfully through the long struggle in which they were shortly after engaged.

Maria Theresa was the soul of the Austrian monarchy : it was her heroic spirit, sage administration, and popular character, which brought its fortunes safe through the terrible crisis that occurred in the middle of the eighteenth century, and laid the foundation of its present grandeur and prosperity. Never was seen greater moral courage, or steadiness of purpose, than in this most remarkable woman. She may almost be said to have been the real founder of the Austrian empire, for she found it on the verge of perdition, and she raised it, by the vigour of her counsels and heroism of her conduct, to the highest pitch of glory. When the Hungarian chiefs, with tears in their eyes, drew their swords, and said with one voice, "*Mori-mur pro rege nostro Maria Theresa !*" they expressed the sympathy of noble minds for such signal intrepidity and resolution as she evinced in her distress. Unlike Catherine of Russia, her private character was irreproachable. Profoundly influenced by religion, she found in its consolations a bulwark of strength amidst all her difficulties ; strictly regular in her conduct, she maintained unsullied purity amidst all the seductions of the Imperial court. Her elevation of mind may be judged of by one circumstance. When on her deathbed, she was so feeble as to be with difficulty preserved from dropping into a slumber ; but she insisted upon being prevented : " I would meet," said she, " my Creator awake." The annals of Rome contain nothing more sublime.¹

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48.
Character
of Maria
Theresa.

¹ Wraxall's
Hist. Mem.
i. 456.
Weber, i.
471, App.

At the accession of her son Joseph II. in 1780, new maxims of government succeeded : the ancient spirit of the monarchy seemed about to expire. His mind was cultivated, his views benevolent, his habits simple ; but these amiable qualities were combined with others of a more dangerous nature. An ardent reformer, a philan-

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49.

Accession of
Joseph II.
Innovation
and im-
provement
became the
order of the
day.

March 17,
1786.

¹ Harcl. i.
32, 36.

50.
Military
forces of
Austria.

thropic philosopher, deeply imbued with the delusions of perfectibility, he was impatient to change everything in the civil, religious, and military administration of his vast states ; and, in the warmth of his benevolence, urged on many reforms neither called for by, nor beneficial to, his subjects. Endowed with an ardent and innovating temperament, he, at the same time, was animated by a desire for territorial acquisition and military glory. Strongly impressed with the inconvenience and expense attending the possession of the Low Countries—so much exposed to France, so far removed from the hereditary states—and relying on the support of Catherine, Empress of Russia, in whose ambitious designs on Turkey he was participant, he was extremely desirous of incorporating Bavaria with his vast possessions, by giving the elector the Low Countries in exchange, with the title of king. Frederick of Prussia instantly sounded the alarm on this dangerous proposal, and by his influence, a treaty was concluded at Berlin between Prussia, Saxony, and Hanover, which was the last act of that great man, and for the time caused this ambitious project on the part of Austria to miscarry. But the Imperial cabinet never lost sight of the design ; and their attempts to carry it into execution, during the course of the revolutionary war, became, as will appear in the sequel, the source of numberless calamities to themselves and to Europe.¹

The Austrian forces, at the commencement of the war, amounted to two hundred and forty thousand infantry, thirty-five thousand cavalry, and one hundred thousand artillery ; and the extent and warlike spirit of the Imperial dominions furnished inexhaustible resources for the maintenance of the contest. Sincere and honest in principle, attached to old institutions, and powerfully swayed by religion, the inhabitants of these varied dominions were, with the exception of some of the Italian provinces, unanimous in their horror of the French republican principles ; while the power and firm ascendant of the nobility

gave steadiness and consistence to their efforts to oppose it. The cavalry was in the finest order, and performed splendid services during the course of the war; but the infantry, though well adapted for plain fighting in a good position, was incapable of the energetic movements which the new system of military operations required, and was disgraced by the frequent occurrence of large bodies laying down their arms. The provinces of Croatia, Transylvania, and the Bannat, lying on the frontier of Turkey, were organised in a military manner; all the inhabitants were trained to the use of arms, and thus from them the government derived inexhaustible supplies of irregular troops. Hungary and the Low Countries supplied the *élite* of the infantry, and the recruits who formed the principal part of the Imperial Guard. The cavalry, admirably mounted, was skilled in all the movements of war, and the artillery respectable, and in good equipment; but the officers of the infantry were deficient in military information, and the soldiers, though well disciplined, wanted the fire and vivacity of the French troops.¹

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¹Hard. i. 33,
34. Journ. i.
235, 236.

The Flemish dominions of Austria had recently been the theatre of a revolt so different from that of France, that it is difficult to conceive how they could both have arisen in countries so near each other in the same age of the world. The Emperor Joseph II. had alienated the affections of these provinces, by the proposal, already mentioned, to exchange them for Bavaria; and had next excited their alarms by a variety of reforms, founded on philosophical principles, totally unsuited to the character, religious spirit, and degree of information possessed by the people. At length the proposal to give a colony of Genevese and Swiss, established near Ostend, the free exercise of their religion, brought matters to a crisis; the universities protested against the innovation, and he replied by abolishing the seignorial jurisdictions, and authorising the sale of a great proportion of the

51.
Austrian
Nether-
lands.

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1 Hard. i.
89, 90. Lac.
viii. 157.
159. Scott's
Napoleon, i.
12, 13.

estates of the monasteries, establishing schools independent of the clergy, and curtailing the privileges of the Estates, by introducing intendants, who almost superseded their authority. These changes excited a universal spirit of disaffection in the provinces, and led to a measure the most extraordinary and the most fatal which modern history has to record.¹

52.
Destruction
of the bar-
rier for-
tresses.

The barrier towns of the Netherlands, extorted from France after so much bloodshed, or erected at so vast an expense, were demolished, and the level country left open and unprotected, as if done expressly to invite the invasion of their enterprising neighbours. It seemed as if the Emperor imagined that the marriage of his sister Marie Antoinette to the King of France had made the union between the two kingdoms perpetual, and that his whole danger arose from the discontented disposition of his own subjects ; or as if the project of exchanging these distant provinces for Bavaria had taken such hold of the Imperial cabinet, that they were desirous only of rendering them incapable of defence in the hands of their new possessors. But the wise in all the adjoining states regarded this suicidal act with very different feelings, and were filled with the most gloomy presentiments as to its effects. "Europe," says Jomini, "beheld with astonishment those celebrated fortresses, so famous in former wars, demolished by the very power which had constructed them ; and the Flemings, proud of the recollections with which they were associated, sighed as they saw the plough razing the vestiges of so much historical glory. The event soon proved the fatal tendency of the measure. The Low Countries, bereft of their fortresses, destitute of mountains, and too distant from the centre of the empire to be effectually defended, fell a prey to any successful invader ; and the Austrian government were first apprised of the ruinous tendency of their measures by the loss of that ancient province of their empire."²

² Jom. i. 159.

The discontents and indignation of the Flemings at

this disastrous measure preyed so severely on the susceptible heart of Joseph II. as to shorten his life. Upon his death, which happened on 16th February 1790, he was succeeded by his brother Leopold, whose paternal and benevolent system of government in Tuscany had long been the object of admiration to all the philosophers of Europe ; but whose character, admirably adapted for the pacific administration of that tranquil duchy, was little suited for the government of the great and varied provinces of the Austrian empire. He found the monarchy shaken in all its parts by the reforms and innovations of his predecessor ; the Belgian provinces in open insurrection ; Bohemia and Lower Austria in sullen discontent ; and Hungary in a state of menacing insubordination. To complete his difficulties, the seeds of a revolution were rapidly expanding in Poland ; while the distracted habits and feeble government of that unbridled democracy afforded little hope that it would be permitted to extricate itself from its embarrassments without foreign invasion. It was easy to foresee that the spoliation of its rich and defenceless plains would throw the apple of discord among the ambitious military monarchies by which it was surrounded.¹

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53.

Accession
and character
of Leopold.¹ Hard. i.
79, 80.

The ill-humour of the Flemings had already broken out into open insurrection. In the autumn of 1789, at the very time that the French were revolting against the privileged classes and the authority of the church, the inhabitants of the Netherlands took up arms to support them. France sought to impose liberal measures upon its government, Flanders to resist those introduced by its sovereign ; France to abolish religion, Flanders to support it.* Brussels, Ghent, and Mons, speedily fell into the hands of the insurgents, and the rapidity of the disasters accelerated the death of the Emperor Joseph. But this

54.

Revolt of
the Flemings
against
Austria.
Sept. 1789.

* It is very remarkable, that those opposite principles were precisely those which, forty years afterwards, led to the nearly simultaneous Revolutions of France and Belgium in 1830.

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¹ Cap. l'Eur.
pend la Rév.
Franç. i. 56,
58. Hard.
i. 88, 90.
Lac. viii.
164. Scott,
i. 15, 20.

success was of short duration. Leopold, his successor, took the most energetic measures to re-establish his authority ; the partisans of the aristocracy in the revolted provinces came to blows with the adherents of the democracy ; the free-thinking French, indignant at the rejection of their principles by the insurgents, refused their support ; the march of Marshal Bender, at the head of the Imperialists, was a continual triumph ; and the Austrian forces resumed the command of the whole of their Flemish dominions, with as much facility as they had lost them.¹

55.
State of the
German
Empire.

The house of Hapsburg was still in possession of the imperial dignity ; but the high-sounding titles and acknowledged supremacy of the Cæsars could not conceal the real weakness of their authority. The vast but unwieldy fabric of the German Empire was governed by the diet assembled at Ratisbon, which consisted of three colleges—that of the electors, that of the princes, and that of the free towns. The first, which had been fixed by the treaty of Westphalia at eight electors, to whom Hanover was afterwards added, possessed the sole right of appointing the emperor : the second, composed of thirty-three ecclesiastical and sixty-one lay princes, enjoyed little influence, and afforded only an inviting prospect to the rapacity of their superiors ; the third, consisting of forty-seven towns, was consulted only for form's sake, and had no real deliberative voice in public affairs. Each circle was bound to furnish a certain contingent of troops for the defence of the empire ; but their soldiers, disunited and various, formed but a feeble protection, and its real strength consisted in the Austrian and Prussian monarchies.²

² Hard. i.
3, 9.

56.
Military
state of
Prussia.

The military strength of Prussia, raised to the highest pitch of which its resources would admit by the genius and successes of the Great Frederick, had rendered that inconsiderable kingdom a first-rate power on the continent of Europe. Its army, one hundred and sixty thousand

strong, comprising thirty-five thousand horse, was in the highest state of discipline and equipment ; but this force, considerable though it was, formed but a small part of the strength of the kingdom. By an admirable system of organisation, the whole youth of the nation were compelled to serve a limited number of years in the army in early life, the effect of which was, not only that a taste for military habits was universally diffused, but that the state always possessed within its bosom a vast reserve of trained soldiers, who might, in any emergency, be called to its defence. The aversion evinced in so many other countries to the military service, from the unlimited length to which it extended, was unknown where it reached only to four years. It came rather to be regarded as an agreeable mode of spending the active and enterprising period of youth. Prussia reaped the full benefit of this judicious system, when she withstood the three greatest powers in Europe during the Seven Years' War : and she was indebted to the same source for those numerous and courageous defenders who flocked to her standard during the latter part of the revolutionary contest.

At the death of the Great Frederick, the Prussian army was considered the first in Europe. Proud of a struggle without a parallel in modern times, and of the unrivalled talent of their commander, the Prussian soldiers possessed not only the moral strength so necessary in war, but had been trained, in a variety of exercises, to the rapid movement of great masses. Annual evolutions, on a large scale, accustomed the army to that necessary piece of instruction ; and under the scientific auspices of Seidlitz, the cavalry had become the most perfect in Europe. In great schools at Berlin, and other places, the young officers were taught the military art ; and there, as elsewhere in the northern monarchies of Europe, the whole youth of any consideration were destined for the profession of arms.¹ The higher situations in the army, however, were

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57.
Military
system of
the mon-
archy.

¹ Jom. i.
228, 232.
Hard. i. 37.

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reserved for the nobles ; but, by degrees, that invidious restriction was abandoned, and in the arduous struggle of 1813, when the co-operation of all classes could alone save her from destruction, Prussia had reason to felicitate herself upon the change.

58.
Its statistics and government.

The states which composed the Prussian monarchy were by no means so coherent or rounded as those which formed the Austrian dominions. Nature had traced out no limits like the Rhine, the Alps, or the Pyrenees, to form the boundary of its dominions ; no great rivers or mountain chains protected its frontiers ; few fortified towns guarded it from the incursions of the vast military monarchies by which it was surrounded. Its surface consisted of fourteen thousand square leagues, and its population, which had been doubled under the reign of Frederick the Great, amounted to nearly eight million souls. But they were composed of various races, spoke different languages, professed different religions, and were protected by no external or internal line of fortresses. Towards Russia and Austrian Poland, a frontier of two hundred leagues was totally destitute of places of defence : Silesia alone enjoyed the double advantage of three lines of fortresses, and the choicest gifts of nature. The national defence rested entirely on the army and the courage of the inhabitants ; but animated by the recollections of the Seven Years' War, they were both elevated to the highest pitch. The government was a military despotism : no privileges of individuals or corporations restrained the authority of the sovereign ; the liberty of the press was unknown : though the public administration was tempered by the wisdom and beneficence of an enlightened system of state policy. This system, begun by Frederick the Great, had passed into settled maxims, which regulated the administration of his successors. In no country of Europe, not even in England or Switzerland, was private right more thoroughly respected, or justice more rigidly observed, both in the courts of law and the domestic

measures of government. "Everything for the people, nothing by them," was the principle of its administration. Toleration, established even to excess, had degenerated into its fatal ally, indifference and infidelity, in many of the higher orders; manners approaching the corruption of Paris were prevalent in the capital; while the middle ranks, united in secret societies of Freemasonry, already indulged those ardent feelings which afterwards exercised so important an influence on the destinies of Europe.¹

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¹ Cap. l'Eur.
i. 47. Hard.
i. 37, 40, 44.

The might of Russia, first experienced by Frederick at the terrible battle of Cunnorsdorff, was now beginning to fill the north with apprehension. This immense empire, comprehending nearly half of Europe and Asia within its dominions, backed by inaccessible frozen regions, secured from invasion by the extent of its surface and the severity of its climate, inhabited by a patient and indomitable race, ever ready to exchange the hardships and monotony of the north for the luxury and adventure of the south, was daily becoming more formidable to the liberties of Europe. The Empress Catherine, endowed, amidst all her feminine passions, with masculine ambition, was urging a bloody war with Turkey, in which the zeal of a religious crusade was directed by the sagacity of civilised warfare. The campaign had commenced with the taking of Oczakoff, which easily yielded to the audacity and fortune of Prince Potemkin; but the courage of the Turks, though long dormant, was at length roused to the highest pitch. Undisciplined and unstable in the field, they were almost invincible behind walls; and the most inconsiderable forts, manned by such defenders, became impregnable save at an enormous expense of blood and treasure. But a new and terrible enemy to the Ottomans arose in SUWARROFF, one of those extraordinary men, who sometimes, by the force of their individual character, alter the destiny of nations. This determined man and dauntless general, who to the highest talents for war united a religious influence over the minds of his soldiers,

59.
State of
Russia.

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1792.

¹ Lac. viii.
155, 156.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 201.
Tooke's
Russia, i.
128. Ségur,
ii. 279.
Biog. Univ.
xliii. 217.
Suwarroff.

60.
The Russian
army and
Cossacks.

joined the Austrians with eight thousand men, when, with seventeen thousand, they were maintaining a doubtful contest with a hundred thousand Turks on the banks of the river Rymniski. His arrival infused such energy into the combined army, that they gained a complete victory over their formidable enemies. He was afterwards employed in the siege of Ismael, and, chiefly by the ascendancy of real greatness over the minds of his soldiers, succeeded in carrying by assault that celebrated fortress, though defended by twenty-four thousand of the bravest troops in the Turkish dominions. British diplomacy was employed before it was too late to avert the threatened calamities of the Ottoman empire; new objects of contention arose; fresh contests sprang out of the Western Revolution, and the glory of placing the cross on the dome of St Sophia has been reserved for a future age.¹

The Russian infantry had long been celebrated for its immovable firmness. At Pultowa, Cunnersdorff, Choczim, and Ismael, it had become distinguished; and the cavalry, though greatly inferior to its present state of discipline and equipment, was inured to service in the war with the Turks, and mounted on a hardy and admirable race of horses. The artillery, now so splendid, was then remarkable only for the cumbrous quality of the carriages, and the obstinate valour of the men. The armies were recruited by a certain proportion of conscripts drawn out of every hundred male inhabitants; a mode of raising troops which, in an immense and rapidly increasing population, furnished an inexhaustible supply of soldiers. They amounted in 1792 to two hundred thousand men; but the half of this force alone was disposable for active operations, the remainder being cantoned on the Pruth, the Caucasus, and the frontiers of Finland. In this enumeration, however, was not comprised either the youth of the military colonies, who afterwards became of great importance, or the well-known Cossacks of the Don. The last composed an immense military force in the southern

provinces of the empire. This irregular force, drawn from the pastoral tribes in the southern provinces of the empire, costs almost nothing to the state. The government merely issues an order for a certain number of this hardy band to take the field, and crowds of active young men appear, equipped at their own expense, mounted on small but indefatigable horses, and ready to undergo all the hardships of war, from their sense of duty to their sovereign, and their hopes of plunder or adventure. Gifted with all the individual intelligence which belongs to the pastoral and savage character, and yet subjected to a certain degree of military discipline, they make the best of all light troops, and are more formidable to a retreating army than the *élite* of the French or Russian guards.¹

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1792.

¹ Jom. i.
254, 258.

Inured to hardships from his infancy, the Russian soldier is better calculated to bear the fatigues of war than any in Europe. He knows no duty so sacred as obedience to his officers; submissive to his discipline as to the ordinances of religion, no fatigue, no privation, can make him forget its obligations. Through every march, through entire campaigns, you behold the cannoneer near his piece, at the post assigned to him by his commander; and, unless authorised to do so, nothing will induce him to abandon it. The waggon-train wax their harness in bivouacs under a cold of 15 deg. of Reaumur, corresponding to 5 deg. above zero of Fahrenheit, as they would do for a day of parade in the finest weather. They have greater facility at rallying after a defeat, than their high degree of individual intelligence has given to the French soldiers, for they have not so clear a sense of the dangers of their situation. By the concurring testimony of all military men, the Russian troops are the steadiest in Europe in disaster. They retire from a field of battle, how disastrous soever, with the precision of a field day, and often inflict severe losses on the enemy which ventures to molest their retreat.²

61.

Character of
the Russian
soldiers.² Jom. i.
256. Cath-
cart's Rus-
sian War,
126, 264.

The whole energies of the nation are turned towards

CHAP.
IX.

1792.

62.
The civil
institutions
and govern-
ment, and
national
spirit of
Russia.

the army. Commerce, the law, and all civil employments, are held in no esteem; the whole youth of any consideration betake themselves to the profession of arms. Immense military schools, in different parts of the empire, annually send forth the whole flower of the population to this dazzling career. Precedence depends entirely on rank in the army, or a corresponding position in civil life, which is arranged according to military grades; and the heirs to the greatest families are compelled to enter its ranks in the lowest grade. They face hardship and danger with the same courage as the private soldiers; they were to be found by their sides in the breach of Ismael and amid the snows of Finland. Promotion is open equally to all: a government depending entirely on its military prowess, finds itself obliged to promote real merit; and great part of the officers at the head of the army have risen from the inferior stations of society. But, formidable as the power of Russia appeared even at that period, the world was far from anticipating the splendid part which she was destined to play in the approaching conflict. Her immense population, amounting in Europe alone to nearly thirty-five millions, afforded an inexhaustible supply of men. The ravages of war or pestilence were speedily filled up, in a country whose numbers were doubling every fifty years. Her soldiers, inured to heat and cold from their infancy, and actuated by a blind devotion to the Czar, united the steady valour of the English to the impetuous energy of the French troops. Dreaded by all her neighbours, and too remote to fear attack, she could afford to send forth her whole disposable force on foreign service; while the want of pecuniary resources was of little importance, so long as the wealth of England could be relied on to furnish the sinews of war. Before the conclusion of hostilities, France saw one hundred and fifty thousand Russian soldiers reviewed on the plains of Burgundy; a force really greater than that with which Attila combated on the field of Châlons.¹

¹ Tooke's
Russia, ii.
138. Jom.
i. 257.

Poland, the destined theatre of glorious achievements, was, at the commencement of the French Revolution, groaning under the weight of foreign oppression. This heroic country, long the bulwark of Christendom against the Turks, the deliverer of Germany under John Sobieski, the ancient conqueror of Russia, had been the victim of the insane democratic passions of its people, and an atrocious conspiracy of the neighbouring kings. The flatness of its surface, the want of fortified towns, and the weakness incident to an elective monarchy and turbulent democracy, had rendered all the valour of the people unavailing, and the greater part of its dominions had been reft from it by its ambitious neighbours at the disastrous epoch of 1772. In 1792, the neighbouring sovereigns found a new pretence for renewing their spoliations. Stanislaus Augustus, the last nominal king, had granted a constitution to his subjects, better adapted than could have been hoped for to their peculiar situation. By it, the crown was declared elective, but the dynasty hereditary—the Princess of Saxony was proclaimed heiress of the throne after the demise of the king. Legislative measures and decrees were to be proposed by the crown, and sanctioned by the Chambers of Lords and Commons. The nobles abandoned their privilege of engrossing every employment under government ; and, to provide for the gradual elevation of the people, the king was obliged, during the sitting of each diet, to ennoble thirty of the bourgeois class. The Catholic religion was declared the established faith. This constitution was proclaimed amidst the universal acclamations of the people ; and new life, it was fondly imagined, had been infused into the ancient monarchy, from the intermixture of popular vigour. But these transports were of short duration. Stanislaus Augustus, however enlightened in framing a constitution, was ill qualified to maintain it. The people, disunited for centuries, were incapable of any measures for their common defence.¹ The jealousy of the Empress Catherine was awakened by the prospect of Poland again

CHAP.
IX.

1792.

63.

Poland, its
divisions
and parti-
tions.

¹ Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 205.
Iac. viii.
168, 172.
Burke, vi.
178.

CHAP. IX. emerging into political vigour, and her fears by the
 1792. proximity of revolutionary principles to her hereditary states. A new treaty of partition was signed between the three adjoining powers, and the conqueror of Ismael was called from the Turkish war, to give the last blow to the ancient defenders of the Christian faith.

64.
 Heroic mili-
 tary charac-
 ter of the
 Poles.

Though deprived of the weight arising from unity of empire, the native valour of the Poles destined them to perform an important part on the theatre of Europe. Napoleon has characterised them as the people who most rapidly become soldiers ; and their ardent patriotism rendered them the ready supporters of any power which held out the prospect of restoring the national independence. The valour of the Polish legions made them distinguished in the wars of Italy and Spain ; they followed the French standards to Smolensko and Moscow, and maintained an unshaken fidelity to them during all the disasters of the subsequent retreat. Though cruelly abandoned by Napoleon in the commencement of the Russian campaign, they adhered to his fortunes through all the subsequent changes ; and, amidst the general defection of Europe, kept their faith inviolate on the field of Leipsic.

65.
 Sweden.

Sweden was too remote from the scene of European conflict to have much weight in the political scale. Secure in a distant and almost inaccessible situation, blessed with a hardy, intrepid, and honest peasantry, she had nothing to dread but from the insatiable progress of Russian ambition. She had recently, however, concluded a glorious war with her powerful neighbour : her arms, in alliance with those of Turkey, had taken the Imperial forces by surprise ; and Gustavus, extricating himself by a desperate exertion of valour from a perilous situation, had destroyed the Russian fleet, and gained a great victory, so near St Petersburg that the sound of the cannon was heard in the palace of the Empress. But, such is the weight of Muscovite power, that its enemies are always glad to purchase peace, even in the moments

of their greatest success. Catherine hastened to get quit of the Swedish war, by offering advantageous terms to her courageous rival, and flattered his chivalrous feelings into accepting them, by representing that the efforts of all sovereigns should now be directed towards resisting the progress of the French Revolution, and that he alone was worthy to head the enterprise.¹

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IX.

1792.

¹ Lac. viii.
167.

Placed on the other extremity of the Russian dominions, the forces of Turkey were still less capable of affecting the balance of the European states. Formidable during the period of its vigour and rise, the Ottoman power, like that of all barbarous nations, had rapidly and irrecoverably declined, after the zenith of its greatness had been attained. It was defended chiefly by the desert and inaccessible nature of its frontiers, the result of the incessant and grievous oppression of its government, and by the jealousies of the European powers, who never failed to interfere when the danger became imminent to its independent existence. Its cavalry, brave, skilful, and admirably mounted, was the most formidable in the world;² but the desultory temper of its people was incapable of the submission and constancy requisite to form an experienced and disciplined body of infantry. Sometimes, however, the spirit of fanaticism roused them to extraordinary exertions, and on such occasions it was not unusual to see a hundred and fifty thousand armed men on the banks of the Danube. But these efforts were of short duration; the first serious reverse dissipated the mighty host, and reduced its leaders to the command of a few regiments of horse. But though these causes rendered the Ottomans incapable of foreign conquest, they were still extremely formidable to an invading army. Their desert and waterless plains afforded no resources to an enemy, while the total want of roads fit for the passage of wheeled carriages, made it almost impossible to bring supplies from the adjoining states, or advance the artillery requisite for the siege of their fortresses.

66.
Ottoman
dominions.

² Nap. i.
375.

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IX.

1792.

Behind the walls of the most inconsiderable towns, the Janizaries fought with desperate, and often successful valour ; the whole inhabitants took to arms in defence of their lives and their religion ; and, lined with such defenders, trifling cities frequently offered a more formidable resistance than the most regular fortifications of Western Europe.

67.
Constant decline of its
population.

The incessant and grinding oppression, however, of the Ottoman government, had implanted a principle of weakness in the Turkish power, little attended to in former times, but of which the effects have since been strikingly displayed. This consisted in the constant and rapid decay of the population, which soon rendered the Osmanlis unequal even to those sudden and vehement exertions, which at former periods had struck such terror into the neighbouring states. At the same time the ignorant and brutal pride of the government, which prevented them from acquiring any knowledge of the situation of the European powers, rendered them incapable of availing themselves of the advantages which their desperate struggles frequently afforded, and on more than one occasion made them throw away the only remaining chance of recovering their lost ground from the unceasing hostility of Russia.¹

¹ Walsh's
Constanti-
nople, i. 193,
194. Buck-
ingham's
Mesopota-
mia, i. 212.

68.
Italy.

From a different cause, the political importance of Italy had sunk as low as that of the Turkish states. Inhabiting the finest country in Europe, blessed with the richest plains and the most fruitful mountains, defended from invasion by the encircling sea and the snow-covered Alps, venerable from the recollections of ancient greatness, and containing the cradle of modern freedom, the people of Italy were yet as dust in the scale of nations. The loss of military courage and of private virtue seems to have been the cause of this sad degradation. When conducted by foreign leaders, the inhabitants of its northern states, like the Portuguese and the Hindoos under British direction, have risen to honourable distinction beneath the

standards of Napoleon ; but, led by their own officers, and following their national colours, they have never, for many centuries, been able to stand the shock of the Transalpine forces. Tuscany, from the effects of the sage and paternal government of Leopold, was flourishing, prosperous, and contented ; but the proximity of France had spread the seeds of discontent in Piedmont, and, in common with its inhabitants, the Milanese beheld with undisguised satisfaction the triumph of the republican arms on the other side of the Alps. It was in vain, however, that a smothered feeling of indignation against foreign rule pervaded the Italian states ; in vain all their theatres rang with acclamations at the line of Alfieri—

“ *Servi siam sì ! ma servi ognor frementi :* ” *

they were incapable of those steady and sustained efforts, which are essential to the establishment either of civil liberty or national independence. Hence, during all the contests of which it was the theatre, Italy became the unresisting prey of the northern victor. The Austrian and French eagles alternately ruled her plains, but the national colours were never unfurled, nor any effort made to liberate them from foreign dominion. On the few occasions on which the Neapolitans and Venetians attempted to raise the standard of independence, they were vanquished by the mere sight of the enemy's force. It is melancholy to reflect, that the descendants of the Romans, the Samnites, and the Cisalpine Gauls, should so far, and to appearance so irrecoverably, have degenerated from the virtue of their ancestors ; but it seems to be the law of nature, that a high state of civilisation cannot *long* coexist with military courage in the favoured climates of the world ; and that, as some counterpoise to the lavish accumulation of her gifts, Nature has denied to their inhabitants the permanent resolution to defend them.¹

¹ Bot. i. 21.
Lac. viii.
147.

The kingdom of Piedmont, situated on the frontier of

* “ We are slaves : but slaves ever chafing against our chains.”

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IX.
1792.
69.
Piedmont.

Italy, partook more of the character of its northern than of its southern neighbours. Its soldiers, chiefly drawn from the mountains of Savoy, Liguria, or the Maritime Alps, were brave, docile, and enterprising, and, under Victor Amadeus, had risen to the highest distinction in the commencement of the eighteenth century. The regular army amounted to thirty thousand infantry, and three thousand five hundred cavalry ; but, besides this, the government could summon to its support fifteen thousand militia, who, in defending their mountain passes, rivalled the best troops in Europe. These were chiefly employed during the war in guarding the fortresses ; and the number of these, joined to the natural strength of the country, and its important situation, as holding the keys of the great passes over the Alps, gave this state a degree of military importance beyond what could have been anticipated from its physical strength.”¹

¹ Jom. i.
244.

70.
Holland.

Sunk in obscure marshes, crushed by the naval supremacy of England, and cooped up in a corner of Europe, the political importance of the Dutch republic had fallen in a great degree in the scale of Europe. Its army was still composed of forty-four thousand men, and its fortified towns and inundations gave it the same means of defence which had formerly been so gloriously exerted ; but the resolution of the inhabitants was by no means at that time equal to the strength of their situation. A long period of peace had weakened the military spirit of the people, and their chief defence was placed in the wretched assistance of auxiliary troops, which never enabled the republic, during the subsequent contests, to bring thirty thousand men into the field. The world at this period was far from anticipating the glorious stand which the Dutch subsequently made, in 1832, against the hostility by land and sea of the two greatest powers in Europe.²

² Jom. i.
246.

71.
Spain.

Animated by stronger passions, descended from more fiery progenitors, and inured to a more varied climate, the people of the Spanish peninsula were calculated to per-

form a more distinguished part in the strife for European freedom. This singular and mixed race united to the tenacity of purpose which distinguished the Gothic the fiery enterprise which characterised the Moorish blood. Centuries of almost unbroken repose had neither extinguished the one nor abated the other ; and the conqueror of Europe erroneously judged the temper of her people, when he measured it by the inglorious reigns of the Bourbon dynasty. The nobles, degenerated by political nullity and long-continued intermarriage with each other, were indeed incapable of strenuous exertion, and the reigning family had none of the qualities calculated to command success. But the peasantry, bold, prosperous, and independent, presented the materials for a resolute army ; and the priesthood, possessed of an unlimited sway over the minds of the lower orders, were animated by the most inextinguishable hatred at the principles of the French Revolution. The decay of its national strength, falsely ascribed by superficial writers to the drain of colonial enterprise,* and the possession of the mines of America, was really owing to the barbarous banishment of the Moors and Jews, the most industrious inhabitants of the kingdom, the accumulation of estates in the hands of communities and noble families, and the predominant influence of the Catholic priesthood, which for centuries had rendered that fine kingdom little else than a cluster of convents, surrounded by a hardy peasantry. But though these causes had rendered Spain incapable of any sustained foreign enterprise, they had not in the least diminished its aptitude for internal defence ;¹ and the people, who in every age have there made common cause with the king and the nobles, flew to arms with unequalled enthusiasm, when their loyalty was awakened by the captivity of their sovereign, and their fanaticism roused by the efforts of their

¹ Foy, ii. 143,
144, 151,
160, 170.
Jovell. 171.
Napier, i.
4, 5.

* The exports of Spain to her colonies in 1790, were £15,000,000 annually ; nearly as much as those of Great Britain at this time (1840) to her colonies, which amount to £16,280,000.—See HUMBOLDT, *Nouvelle Espagne*, iv. 153, 154.

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pastors. By a just retribution, the first great reverse of the French arms was occasioned by the spirit of religious resistance nourished by their first flagrant acts of injustice ; and the disaster of Baylen would not have arisen, nor the bones of five hundred thousand French whitened the plains of Spain, but for the confiscation of the property of the French church by the Constituent Assembly.

72.
Its military
forces.

The nominal military strength of Spain, at the commencement of the Revolution, was one hundred and forty thousand men ; but this force was far from being effective, and in the first campaigns the cabinet of Madrid, though they reinforced their army by thirty-six battalions on the breaking out of the war, were never able to raise their force in the field to eighty thousand combatants. But on occasion of the invasion in 1808, an immense insurrectionary force sprang up in every part of the country. These undisciplined levies, however, though occasionally brave, like the Turks, in defending walls, were miserably deficient in the essential qualities of regular soldiers. They had neither the steadiness, mutual confidence, nor conduct necessary for success in the field. Accordingly, they were almost invariably routed in every encounter ; and but for the tenacity of purpose arising from their character, ignorance, and habit of boasting, which effectually concealed the extent of their disasters from all but the sufferers under them, and the continued presence of a large English force in the field, the war would have been terminated soon after its commencement, with very little trouble to the French Emperor.¹

¹ Napier, i.
237 *et seq.*
Jom. i. 240.

73.
Character of
the Spanish
army.

The Spanish soldiers have never exhibited in the wars of the Revolution that firmness in the field which formerly distinguished their infantry at Pavia, Rocroi, and in the Low Countries. They have been distinguished rather by the tumultuary habits and tendency to abandon their colours on the first reverse, which belong to the troops of tropical climates, and which characterised their forefathers in the Roman wars. It would seem as if the long residence of

their ancestors in a warm climate had melted away the indomitable valour which distinguished the Gothic race in the frozen realms whence they originally came. Military glory was held in little esteem; hardly four of the grandees were to be found, in 1792, in the army or naval service. But the peasantry evinced throughout the war the most obstinate and enduring spirit. Though routed on numberless occasions, they almost always rallied, as in the days of Sertorius, in more favourable circumstances; and, though deserted by nearly all the nobility, they maintained a prolonged contest with the conqueror of Northern Europe.¹

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IX.
1792.

Cradled in snowy mountains, tilling a sterile soil, and habituated to severe habits, the Swiss peasantry exhibited the same features which have always rendered them so celebrated in European wars. Their lives were as simple, their courage as undaunted, their patriotism as warm, as those of their ancestors who died on the fields of Morat or Morgarten. Formidable in defence, however, their numerical strength, which did not exceed thirty-eight thousand regular soldiers,² rendered them of little avail in the great contests which rolled round the feet of their mountains. Occasions, indeed, were not wanting when they displayed the ancient virtue of their race: their conflicts in Berne and Underwalden, at the time of the French invasion, equalled the far-famed celebrity of their wars of independence; and, amidst the disgraceful defection of the 10th August, the Swiss guards alone remained faithful to the fortunes of Louis, and merited, by their death, the touching inscription on the graves at Thermopylæ:

74.
Switzer-
land.

² Statistique
de la Suisse,
102.

“Go, stranger! and at Lacedæmon tell,
That here, obedient to her laws, we fell.”*

Such was the state of the principal European powers at the commencement of the French Revolution. A spirit of gentleness pervaded the political world, the effect of

* “Dic, hospes, Spartæ, nos te hîc vidisse jacentes,
Diua sanetis patriæ legibus obsequimur.”

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IX.

1792.

75.
State of so-
ciety over
Europe at
this epoch.

increasing knowledge and long-continued prosperity. Even the most despotic empires were ruled with a lenity unknown in former times, and the state prisons of all the European monarchies would probably have exhibited as few inmates as the Bastille when it was stormed in 1789. Ever since the termination of the general war in 1763, a growing spirit of improvement had pervaded the European states, and repeatedly called forth the praises of the contemporary annalists. Agriculture had risen into universal esteem ; kings were setting the example of cultivating the soil ; and a large portion of the nobility were everywhere lending their aid to improve that first and best of human pursuits. Leopold in Tuscany and Flanders, and Louis in France, were ardently engaged in the amelioration of their dominions. Even in the regions of the north, the spirit of improvement was steadily advancing. The able exertions of Frederick had nearly doubled in a single reign the resources of his dominions ; and in Poland and Russia, the example of gradually enfranchising the serfs had been set with the happiest success. The haughtiness and pride of aristocratic birth were steadily yielding to the influence of extending wants and an enlarged commerce, and in many of the European states the highest offices under government were held by persons of plebeian birth. Necker, Vergennes, and Sartines, who successively held the most important situations in France, were of this class. The Inquisition had been voluntarily abandoned in Parma, Placentia, Milan, and Modena, and toleration over all Europe had spread to a degree unknown in former times. All the remaining vestiges of that fierce spirit, which sullied with barbarism the lofty and romantic courtesy of ancient manners, were gradually softening away ; and the flames of that religious zeal, which for two centuries had so often kindled the torch of civil discord, had greatly subsided. Every succeeding generation was of a character milder and gentler than the last. A diffusion of liberality was beginning to pervade the mass of mankind,

although the prophetic eye could discern in it the fatal intermixture of religious indifference. The diversified classes of society harmonised with each other in a way hitherto unknown ; and whatever might be the peculiarities of particular constitutions, a sweeter blood seemed on the whole to circulate through every member of the political body. The lowest of the people, under governments the most despotic, no longer held their countenances prone to the earth, but were taught to erect them, with a becoming sense of their own nature ; and the brow of authority, instead of an austere frown, wore a more inviting air of complacency and amenity.¹

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IX.

1792.

¹ Lac. viii.
140. Bot.
i. 13, 19.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 207,
211 ; xxiv.
12, 13 ;
xxvii. 3, 4 ;
xxviii. 169.

But while such was the general character of Europe, there was an important distinction between the national tendency of its northern and southern states, which soon produced the most lasting effects on their respective fortunes. The spirit of the south was in general pacific, that of the north ambitious ; the repose of the former bordered on inertness, the energy of the latter on turbulence. The amelioration of the first was slow, and almost imperceptible, flowing chiefly from the energy or benignity of the sovereigns ; the improvements of the latter were rapid and violent, taking their origin in the increasing importance of the people. Pleasure was the leading object in the south ; glory, military glory, in the north. The difference was perceptible even during the progress of pacific changes ; but when war broke out, its effects became of the last importance, and speedily led to the subjugation of the southern by the northern states of Europe.²

76.
Difference
between the
South and
the North.

² Lac. viii.
141.

The greatest blessings border upon misfortunes ; out of calamity often springs the chief improvement of the human race. To the eye of philosophy it was not difficult to discern that the growing passion for innovation, to which all reform is more or less related, was pregnant with political danger ; that the universal toleration which

77.
General
passion for
innovation.

CHAP.
IX.

1791.

prevailed bordered upon infidelity ; and that the disposition to improve, emanating from the purest intention in the higher ranks, was likely to agitate the spirit of democracy in the lower. Such a peril, accordingly, was foreseen and expressed by the contemporary historians ; but they did not foresee, nor could human imagination have anticipated, either the terrible effects of that spirit upon the passing generation, or the beneficial effects which the storm that swept the world was destined to have upon the future condition of mankind.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
xxviii. 29,
30.

78.
State of
France
when hosti-
lities com-
menced.

The state of France at the period when hostilities first commenced, cannot be better described than in the words of the eloquent and philanthropic Abbé Raynal, so long an advocate of liberal institutions, in a letter to the National Assembly :—" Standing on the verge of the grave, on the point of quitting an immense family, for whose happiness I have never ceased to wish, what do I behold around me in this capital ? Religious troubles, civil dissension, the consternation of some, the audacity of others, a government the slave of popular tyranny, the sanctuary of the laws violated by lawless men ; soldiers without discipline, chiefs without authority, ministers without resources ; a king, the first and best friend of his people, deprived of all power, outraged, menaced, a prisoner in his own palace, and the sovereign power transferred to popular clubs, where ignorant and brutal men take upon themselves to decide every political question. Such is the real state of France ; few but myself would have the courage to declare it, but I do so, because I feel it to be my duty ; because I am bordering on my eightieth year ; because no one can accuse me of being a partisan of the ancient regime ; because, while I groan over the desolation of the French church, no one can assert that I am a fanatical priest ; because, while I regard as the sole means of salvation the re-establishment of the legitimate authority, no one can suppose that I am insensible to the blessings of real freedom."² When such was the language of the first supporters of the Revolution, it is noways

² Lac. viii.
355, 356.

surprising that the European powers beheld with dismay the progress of principles fraught with such calamitous consequences, according to the admission of their own partisans, in the countries where they had commenced.

The language of the French government towards the people of all other states, was such as to excite the most serious apprehension of the friends of order in every civilised country. Not only the orators in the clubs, but the members of the Assembly, openly proclaimed the doctrine of fraternisation with the revolutionary party all over the world. The annexation of the states of Avignon and the Venaissin was early marked by Mr Burke as the indication of an ambitious spirit, for which, ere long, the limits of Europe would not suffice. The seizure of this little state by the French Republic was the more remarkable, that it was the first decided aggression on the part of its rulers upon the adjoining nations, and that it was committed on an independent sovereign, with whom not even the pretence of a quarrel existed, and who was not alleged to have entered into any hostile alliances against that power. This was followed up in the same year by the seizure of Porentruy, part of the dominions of the Bishop of Bâle, a German prelate noways subject to the French government.¹

The French Revolution surprised the European powers in their usual state of smothered jealousy or open hostility to each other. Catherine of Russia was occupied with her ambitious projects in the south-east of Europe, and her ascendancy at the courts of Berlin and Vienna was so great that no serious opposition was to be apprehended from their hostility. France had shortly before signed a commercial treaty with Great Britain, which was considered as admitting on the part of the latter the ascendancy of her naval rival, and seriously impaired her influence on the continent of Europe; while Frederick the Great had recently before his death concluded the convention of Berlin, for the protection of Bavaria and the lesser powers from the ambition of the House of Austria.² But the death of that great monarch, which took place in August 1786, was an

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1791.

79.

Menacing
language of
the French
with refer-
ence to other
states.Sept. 17,
1791.Oct. 4, 1791.
¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxix. 1316.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 199,
206; xxxiv.
39.

80.

Mutual jea-
lousies of
the Euro-
pean powers
at this
period.Sept. 28,
1786.Jan. 22,
1785.
² Cap. i. 72,
60.

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1788.

81.
Diplomacy
of Prussia
after the
death of
Frederick
the Great.

irreparable loss to the diplomacy of Europe at the very time when, from the commencement of new and unheard-of dangers, his sagacity was most required.

His successor, Frederick William, though distinguished for personal valour, and not destitute of penetration and good sense, was too indolent and voluptuous to be qualified to follow out the active thread of negotiation which his predecessor had held. Hertzberg became, after the death of the late monarch, the soul of the Prussian cabinet, and his whole object was to provide a counterpoise to the enormous preponderance of the two imperial courts, which had recently become still more formidable from the intimate union that prevailed between Catherine and Joseph II. This alliance had been cemented by their common ambitious designs on Turkey, and had been ostentatiously proclaimed to Europe during a voyage which the two potentates made together on the Volga, to the Crimea, and shores of the Black Sea. A treaty with France promised no satisfactory result in the distracted state to which that kingdom was now reduced. In these circumstances, an alliance of Great Britain, Prussia, and Holland, appeared the only means of providing for the balance of power in Europe; and under the influence of Mr Pitt, a convention was concluded at Loo between these three powers, which again established the preponderance of England on the Continent, and long preserved the independence of Northern Germany.¹ Thus, at the very time that the most appalling dangers were about to arise to the liberties of Europe from the revolutionary ambition of France on its western side, the views of its statesmen were turned to another quarter; and were solely directed to prevent the aggrandisement of the military monarchies, which seemed on the point of swallowing up its eastern dynasties.²

Passionately desirous of military renown, Joseph II. addressed, early in 1788, a confidential letter to Frederick William, in which he openly avowed his designs on

June 13,
1788.¹ Martens,
Traité, v.
172.² Hard, i.
62, 63.

Turkey, and justified them by the practice of the Turks themselves, and of all the European powers in similar circumstances.* Though flattered by this mark of confidence, the Prussian cabinet was not blinded to the danger which menaced Europe from the approaching dismemberment of Turkey, so rapidly following the partition of Poland. Meanwhile the united forces of Austria and Russia made great progress ; the throne of Constantinople seemed shaken to its foundation. Ocza-koff had fallen, and with it the bravest defenders of the Turkish power ; the Prince of Saxe-Coburg and Suwarroff successively defeated large bodies of Osmanlis at Fochzani and Martinesti, while Belgrade, the bulwark of Transylvania, yielded to the scientific measures of Marshal Laudohn. The Russians, on the shores of the Black Sea, had completely routed Hassan Pasha at Tobak, and, after a long siege, made themselves masters of Bender ; while the Austrians, no less successful, reduced Bucharest, and spread themselves over all the northern shores of the Danube. Orsova had fallen ; and the united imperial armies, two hundred and fifty thousand strong, stretching over a line four hundred miles in length, already, in the spring of 1790, menaced Giurgevo and Widdin, and threatened speedy destruction to the Ottoman empire.¹

CHAP.
IX.

1790.

82.

Designs of
Austria on
Turkey.¹ Ann. Reg.
xxxi. 182,
200 ; and
xxxiii. 1, 18.
Hard. i. 68,
84.

Seriously alarmed at the dangers which evidently

* "The sword is drawn," said he, "and it shall not be restored to the scabbard till I have regained all that has been wrested by the Osmanlis from my house. My enterprise against Turkey has no other object but to regain the possessions which time and misfortunes have detached from my crown. The Turks consider it as an invariable maxim to seize the first convenient opportunity of regaining the possessions which they have lost. The House of Brandenburg has risen to its present pitch of glory by adopting the same principles. Your uncle wrested Silesia from my mother at a moment when, surrounded by enemies, she had no other support but her native grandeur of mind and the love of her people. During a century of losses, Austria has made no proportionate acquisition ; for the larger portion of Poland, on the last partition, fell to Prussia. I hope these reasons will appear sufficient to justify me in declining the intervention of your Majesty ; and that you will not oppose my endeavours to Germanise some hundreds of thousands of Orientals."—HARD. i. 65, 66.

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IX.

1790.

83.

Efforts of
Mr Pitt to
arrest the
ruin of
Turkey,
which are
successful.July 27,
1790.Aug. 13,
1790.¹ Hard. i.
86, 87.
Martin's
Sup. iv. 500.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 17,
19.

menaced Europe from the fall of the Turkish empire, Mr Pitt was indefatigable in his exertions, before it was too late, to arrest the progress of the imperial courts. By his means the alliance was drawn closer between Prussia and Great Britain ; and Frederick William, fully alive to the perils which threatened his dominions from the aggrandisement of Austria, advanced, at the head of one hundred thousand men, to the frontiers of Bohemia. Unable to undertake a war at the same time on the Elbe and the Danube, and uneasy, both on account of the menacing aspect of France and the insurrection in Flanders, Austria paused in the career of conquest. Conferences were opened at Reichenbach, midway between the headquarters of the Prussian and Imperial armies ; and, after some delay, preliminaries of peace were signed, which terminated the differences between the cabinets of Vienna and Berlin, and opened the way for the accommodation of the former with the Porte. The Prussian army immediately retired : thirty thousand Austrians, under Marshal Bender, moved towards the Low Countries, and speedily reduced its discontented provinces to submission ; while a truce was shortly after concluded for nine months between the Turks and Imperialists, which was followed by conferences at Sistow, and at length a definitive treaty was signed at that place on the 4th August 1791. Meanwhile the Empress Catherine, who was not yet formally included in the pacification, intimated her intention of suspending hostilities to the courts of St James's and Berlin, and, as a gage of her sincerity, concluded at Verela a peace with the King of Sweden, who, at the instigation of England and Prussia, had taken up arms, and contended with undaunted valour against his gigantic neighbour.¹

84.
Causes of
this general
pacification.

This general and rapid pacification of Europe, this stilling of so many passions and allaying of so many jealousies, was not the result of accident. It arose from the universal consternation which the rapid progress of

the French Revolution excited, and the clear perception which all the cabinets at length began to have, of the imminent danger to every settled institution from the contagion of its principles. But, amidst the general alarm, wiser principles were generally prevalent than could reasonably have been anticipated, as to the means of warding off the danger. Mr Pitt in England, Kaunitz at Vienna, and Hertzberg at Berlin, concurred in opinion that it would be imprudent and dangerous to oppose the progress of innovation in France, if it could be moderated by a party in that country sufficiently strong to prevent its leaders from running into excess; and that, in the mean time, the strictest measures should be adopted which circumstances would admit, to prevent its principles from spreading into other states. Such were the maxims on which the conduct of England, Austria, and Prussia was founded during the first two years of the Revolution; though the Empress Catherine, more vehement and imperious in her disposition, or possibly more sagacious in her anticipations, never ceased to urge the necessity of a general confederacy to arrest, by more violent means, the march of so formidable a convulsion. But circumstances at length occurred which put a period to these moderate counsels at Vienna and Berlin, and precipitated the European monarchies into the terrible contest which awaited them.¹

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1790.

From the time that Louis had been brought a prisoner to Paris, on 5th October 1789, he had recommended to the King of Spain to pay no regard to any public act bearing his name, which was not confirmed by an autograph letter from himself; and in the course of the following summer he authorised the Baron Breteuil, his former minister, to sound the German powers on the possibility of extricating him from the state of bondage to which he was reduced. In November 1790, after he found that he was to be forced to adopt measures of hostility against the Church, he resolved to be more explicit; and in

¹ Cap. Eur.
i. 98, 99.
Hard. i. 85,
90.

85.
causes
which
brought on
the Revolution-
ary war.

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1790.

December following he addressed a circular to the whole sovereigns of Europe, with a view to the formation of a congress, supported by an armed force, to consider the means of arresting the factions at Paris, and re-establishing a constitutional monarchy in France.* This circular excited everywhere the warmest feelings of sympathy and commiseration ; but the views of the cabinets, notwithstanding, continued at variance—that of Vienna still adhered to the necessity of recognising the revolutionary regime, those of St Petersburg and Stockholm openly proclaimed the necessity of an immediate crusade against the infected power.¹

¹ Hard. i.
95, 97.

86.
Violent proceedings of the National Assembly against the German vassals of the French crown.
Dec. 14, 1790.

So early as the close of 1790, however, the violent proceedings of the National Assembly had brought them into collision with the states of the Empire. The laws against the emigrants and priests, which were passed with so much precipitance by that body, infringed the rights of the German vassals of the French crown in Alsace and Lorraine, whose rights were guaranteed by the treaty of Westphalia ; and the Emperor, as the head of the Empire, addressed a remonstrance to the French King on the subject. Overruled by his revolutionary ministry, Louis made answer that the affair was foreign

* “Monsieur mon Frère—J’ai appris par M. de Moustier l’intérêt que votre Majesté avait témoigné, non seulement pour ma personne, mais pour le bien de mon royaume. Les dispositions de votre Majesté, à m’en donner des témoignages dans tous les cas où cet intérêt peut être utile pour le bien de mon peuple, ont excité vivement ma sensibilité. Je le réclame avec confiance dans ce moment-ci, où malgré l’acceptation que j’ai faite de la nouvelle constitution, les factieux montrent ouvertement le projet de détruire le reste de la monarchie. Je viens de m’adresser à l’Empereur, à l’Impératrice de Russie, aux rois d’Espagne et de Suède ; et je leur présente l’idée d’un congrès des principales puissances de l’Europe, appuyé d’une force armée, comme la meilleure mesure pour arrêter ici les factieux, donner le moyen d’établir un ordre de choses plus désirable, et empêcher que le mal qui nous travaille puisse gagner les autres états de l’Europe. J’espère que votre M. je té approuvera mes idées, et qu’elle me gardera le secret le plus absolu sur la démarche que je fais auprès d’elle. Elle sentira aisément que les circonstances où je me trouve m’obligent à la plus grande circonspection : c’est ce qui fait qu’il n’y a que le Baron de Breteuil qui soit instruit de mon secret. Votre Majesté peut lui faire passer ce qu’elle voudra.” — LOUIS XVI. au ROI DE PRUSSE, 3 Décembre 1790 ; LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, i. 322, 323.

to the Empire, as the princes and prelates affected were reached as vassals of France, not as members of the Empire, and that indemnities had been offered. This answer was not deemed satisfactory ; a warm altercation ensued : Leopold asserted, in a spirited manner, the rights of the German princes ; and this dispute, joined to the obvious and increasing dangers of his sister, Marie Antoinette, gradually inclined the Emperor to more vigorous measures, and strengthened the bonds of union with Frederick William, who openly inclined towards the deliverance of the unhappy princess. The King of England, also, took a vivid interest in the misfortunes of the royal family of France, promising, as Elector of Hanover, to concur in any measures which might be deemed necessary to extricate them from their embarrassments ; and he sent Lord Elgin to Leopold, who was then travelling in Italy, to concert measures for the common object. An envoy from Prussia at the same time reached the Emperor, and to them was soon joined the Comte d'Artois, who was at Venice, and brought to the scene of deliberation the warmth, haste, and inconsiderate energy, which had rendered him the first decided opponent of the Revolution, and ultimately proved so fatal to the fortunes of his family.¹

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Meanwhile, the King and Queen of France, finding their situation insupportable, and being aware that not only their liberty, but their lives, were now endangered, resolved to make every exertion to break their fetters. With this view, they despatched secret agents to Brussels and Cologne, to communicate with the Emperor and the King of Prussia ; and Count Alphonse de Durfort was instructed to inform the Comte d'Artois, that the King could no longer influence his ministers ; that he was in reality the prisoner of M. Lafayette, who secretly and hypocritically was conducting everything to a republic ; that the royal family were filled with the most anxious

¹ Hard. i.
100, 107.
Cap. Eur.
pend. la Rév.
Franç. i. 87,
108, 109.

87.
Efforts of
the King
and Queen
of France
to effect
their de-
liverance.

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1791.
¹ Hard. i.
 105, 111.
 Bertrand
 de Molle-
 ville, Mém.
 de Louis
 XVI. ii.
 309, 318.

88.
 Treaty of
 Mantua.
 May 1791.

desire to make their escape by the route either of Metz or Valenciennes, and placed entire reliance on the zeal and activity of their august relatives. Furnished with these instructions, Count Durfort left Paris in the end of April 1791, and soon joined the Comte d'Artois at Venice, who was already arranging, with the English and Prussian envoys, the most probable means of overcoming the scruples of the Emperor.¹

When these different parties met with the Emperor at Mantua, on 20th May 1791, the most discordant plans were submitted for his consideration. That of the Comte d'Artois, which was really drawn up by M. Calonne, the former minister of Louis XVI., was the most warlike, and proposed the adoption, in July following, of hostile measures. The Allied courts did not go into these precipitate views; but, alarmed by the menacing principles openly announced by the National Assembly, and by the growing symptoms of disaffection among their own subjects, the Emperor of Germany, the King of Sardinia, and the King of Spain, concluded an agreement by which it was concerted —

“ 1. That the Emperor should assemble thirty-five thousand men on the frontiers of Flanders, while fifteen thousand soldiers of the Germanic body should present themselves in Alsace; fifteen thousand Swiss on the frontiers of Franche-Comté; fifteen thousand Piedmontese on the frontiers of Dauphiné; and the King of Spain should collect an army of twenty thousand men on the Pyrenees. 2. That these forces should be formed into five armies, which should act on their respective frontiers of France, and join themselves to the malcontents in the provinces and the troops who preserved their allegiance to the throne. 3. That in the following July, a protestation should be issued by the princes of the House of Bourbon, and immediately after a manifesto by the Allied powers.² 4. That the object of these assemblages of troops was, to induce the

² Hard. i.
 Journ. i. 262.
 Pièces Just.
 No. 1. Mém.
 i. 131. Ber-
 trand de
 Molleville,
 Mém. sur le
 Règne de
 Louis XVI.
 ii. 317, 321.
 Cap. i. 116.

French people, terrified at the approach of the Allied forces, to seek for safety in submitting themselves to the King, and imploring his mediation." The sovereigns counted at least on the neutrality of England; but it was expected, from the assurances given by Lord Elgin, that, as Elector of Hanover, the English monarch would accede to the coalition.

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1791.

Meanwhile, the royal family of France, following the councils of Baron Breteuil, and influenced by the pressing and increasing dangers of their situation, had finally resolved on escaping from Paris. While Louis and M. de Bouillé were combining the means of an evasion, either towards Montmedy or Metz, the principal courts of Europe were apprised of the design; Leopold gave orders to the government of the Low Countries to place at the disposal of the King, when he reached their frontiers, not only the Imperial troops, but the sums which might be in the public treasury; and the King of Sweden, stimulated by his chivalrous spirit, and the persuasions of Catherine of Russia, drew near to the frontiers of France, under pretence of drinking the waters, but in reality to receive the august fugitives. The Emperor, the Comte d'Artois, and M. Calonne, however, strongly opposed the contemplated flight, as extremely hazardous to the royal family, and calculated to retard rather than advance the ultimate settlement of the affairs of France. They were persuaded that the only way to effect this object, so desirable to that country and to Europe, was to support the royalist and constitutional party in France, by the display of such a force as might enable them to throw off the yoke of the revolutionary faction, and establish a permanent constitution by the consent of king, nobles, and people. Impressed with these ideas, the Emperor addressed a circular* from Padua to the principal powers, in which

89.
Plans of the
royal family
of France
for their
escape.

July 6.

* He invited the sovereigns to issue a joint declaration—"That they regard the cause of his most Christian Majesty as their own; that they demand that that prince and his family should forthwith be set at liberty, and permitted to go wherever they chose, under the safeguard of inviolability and respect to

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July 25.

he announced the principles according to which, in his opinion, the common efforts should be directed. At the same time Count Lamark, a secret agent of Louis, came to London, to endeavour to engage Mr Pitt in the same cause. But nothing could induce the English government to swerve from the strict neutrality which, on a full consideration of the case, it had resolved to adopt. At Vienna, however, the efforts of the anti-revolutionary party were more successful; and on the 25th July, Prince Kaunitz and Bischofswerder signed, on the part of Austria and Prussia, a convention, wherein it was stipulated that the two courts should unite their good offices to combine the European powers for some common measure in regard to France; that they should conclude a treaty of alliance, as soon as peace was established between the Empress Catherine and the Ottoman Porte; and that the former power, as well as Great Britain, the States-general, and the Elector of Saxony, should be invited to accede to it. This convention, intended to put a bridle on the ambition of Russia on the one hand, and of France on the other, deserves attention as the first basis of the grand alliance which afterwards wrought such wonders in Europe.¹

¹ Hard. i.
114, 119,
121.

90.
Treaty of
Pillnitz.
Aug. 27.

The pressing dangers of the royal family of France, after the failure of the flight to Varennes, and their open imprisonment in the Tuileries by the revolutionists, soon after suggested the necessity of more urgent measures. It was agreed for this purpose, that a personal interview should take place between the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, to concert measures on that all-important subject. This led to the

their persons; that they will combine to avenge, in the most signal manner, every attempt on the liberty, honour, or security of the King, the Queen, or the royal family; that they will recognise as legitimate only those laws which shall have been agreed to by the King when in a state of entire liberty; and that they will exert all their power to put a period to a usurpation of power which has assumed the character of an open revolt, and which it behoves all established governments for their own sake to repress.”—HARD. i. 116.

famous meeting at Pilnitz, which took place in August 1791, between the Emperor and the King of Prussia. There was framed the no less celebrated Declaration of Pilnitz, which was couched in the following terms:—

“Their Majesties, the Emperor and the King of Prussia, having considered the representations of Monsieur, brother of the King, and of his Excellency the Comte d’Artois, declare conjointly, that they consider the situation of the King of France as a matter of common interest to all the European sovereigns. They hope that the reality of that interest will be duly appreciated by the other powers, whose assistance they will invoke, and that, in consequence, they will not decline to employ their forces, conjointly with their Majesties, in order to put the King of France in a situation to lay the foundation of a monarchical government, conformable alike to the rights of sovereigns and the well-being of the French nation. In that case, the Emperor and King are resolved to act promptly with the forces necessary to attain their common end. In the mean time they will give the requisite orders for the troops to hold themselves in immediate readiness for active service.” It was alleged by the French that, besides this, several secret articles were agreed to by the Allied sovereigns; but no sufficient evidence has ever been produced to substantiate the allegation; and the testimony of those best acquainted with the facts is decidedly the other way.^{1*}

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1791.

Although these declarations appeared abundantly hostile to the usurpation of government by the democracy of France, yet the conduct of the Allied powers

91.
Which led
to nothing.

* “As far as we have been able to trace,” said Mr Pitt, “the Declaration signed at Pilnitz referred to the imprisonment of Louis XVI.; its immediate view was to effect his deliverance, if a concert sufficiently extensive could be formed for that purpose. It left the internal state of France to be decided by the King, restored to his liberty, with the free consent of the States of the kingdom, and it did not contain one word relative to the dismemberment of the country.”²—“This, though not a plan for the dismemberment of France,” said Mr Fox in reply, “was, in the eye of reason and common sense, an aggression against it. There was, indeed, no such thing as a treaty of Pilnitz; but there was a Declaration, which amounted to an act of hostile aggression.”³

² Parl. Hist. xxxiv. 1315.³ Ib. 1356.

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soon proved that they had no serious intention at that period of going to war. On the contrary, their measures evinced, after the Declaration of Pilnitz, that they were actuated by pacific sentiments ; and in October 1791 it was officially announced by M. Montmorin, the minister of foreign affairs, to the Assembly, "that the King had no reason to apprehend aggression from any foreign power." * Their real object was to induce the French, by the fear of approaching danger, to liberate Louis from the perilous situation in which he was placed. Their forces were by no means in a condition to undertake a contest ; their minds were haunted by a superstitious dread of the dangers with which it would be attended. This is admitted by the ablest of the Republican writers.^{1†}

¹ Bot. i. 73.
Jom. i. 191.
Lac. ix. 24.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiv. 86.
Cap. i. 117.

92.

Their warlike preparations are all abandoned by the Allies.

No warlike preparations were made by the German States, no armies were collected on the frontiers of France ; and accordingly, when the struggle began next year, they were taken entirely by surprise. France had one hundred and thirty thousand men on the Rhine and along her eastern frontier, while the Austrians had only ten thousand soldiers in the Low Countries. In

* "We are accused," said M. Montmorin, the minister of foreign affairs, in a report laid before the Assembly on 31st October 1791, "of wishing to propagate our opinions, and of trying to raise the people of other states against their governments. I know that such accusations are false, so far as regards the French ministry ; but it is too true that individuals, and even societies, have sought to establish with that view correspondences in the neighbouring states ; and it is also true that all the princes, and almost all the governments of Europe, are daily insulted in our incendiary journals. The King, by accepting the constitution, has removed the danger with which you were threatened : nothing indicates at this moment any disposition on their part to a hostile enterprise." Jom. i. 286 ; *Pièces Just.* No. 6.

† "The Declaration of Pilnitz," says Thiers, "remained without effect ; either from a cooling of zeal on the part of the Allied sovereigns, or from a sense of the danger which Louis would have run, after he was, from the failure of the flight to Varennes, a prisoner in the hands of the Assembly. His acceptance of the constitution was an additional reason for awaiting the result of experience before plunging into active operations. This was the opinion of Leopold and his minister Kaunitz. Accordingly, when Louis notified to the foreign courts that he had accepted the constitution, and was resolved faithfully to observe it, Austria returned an answer entirely pacific, and Prussia and England did the same."—THIERS, ii. 19.

truth, the primary and real object of the Convention of Pilnitz, was the extrication of the King and royal family from personal danger; and no sooner did this object appear to be gained, by their liberation from confinement and the acceptance of the constitution, than the coalesced sovereigns gladly laid aside all thoughts of hostile operations. For such measures they were but ill prepared, and the urgent state of affairs in Poland, then ready to be swallowed up by the ambition of Catherine, rendered hostilities in an especial manner unadvisable. When Frederick William received the intelligence of the acceptance of the constitution by Louis, he exclaimed—"At length, then, the peace of Europe is secured." The Emperor likewise testified his satisfaction in a letter addressed to the French monarch; and shortly after despatched a circular to all the sovereigns of Europe,* in which he announced that the King's acceptance of the constitution had removed the reason for hostile demonstrations, and that they were in consequence suspended. The cabinet of Berlin coincided entirely in these sentiments; and the opinion was general, both there and at Vienna, that the troubles of France were at length permanently appeased by the great concessions made to the democratic party;¹ and that prudence and address were all that was now necessary to enable the French monarch to reign, if not with

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¹ Hard. i.
157, 159.
Th. ii. 78.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiii. 206,
208. Cap.
Eur. i. 99.

* "His Majesty announces to all the courts, to whom he transmitted his first circular, dated Padua, 6th July, that the situation of the King of France, which gave occasion to the said circular, having changed, he deems it incumbent upon him to lay before them the views which he now entertains on the subject. His Majesty is of opinion that the King of France is now to be regarded as free; and, in consequence, his acceptance of the constitution, and all the acts following thereon, are valid. He hopes that the effect of this acceptance will be to restore order in France, and give the ascendancy to persons of moderate principles, according to the wish of his most Christian Majesty; but as these appearances may prove fallacious, and the disorders of license and the violence towards the King may be renewed, he is also of opinion that the measures concerted between the sovereigns should be suspended, and not entirely abandoned; and that they should cause their respective ambassadors at Paris to declare that the coalition still subsists, and that, if necessary, they would still be ready to support the rights of the King and of the monarchy."—*Letter*, 23d October 1791; HARD. i. 159.

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his former lustre, at least without risk, and in a peaceable manner.

1791.

93.
More vigorous views
of Catherine
of Russia
and Gus-
tavus of
Sweden.

Such being the views entertained by the two powers whose situation necessarily led them to take the lead in the strife, it was of comparatively little importance what were the feelings of the more distant or inferior courts. In the north, Catherine and Gustavus were intent on warlike measures, and refused to admit into their presence the ambassador who came to announce the King's acceptance of the constitution, upon the ground that the sovereign could not be regarded as a free agent : and the courts of Spain and Sardinia received the intelligence coldly. Impressed with the idea, which the event proved to be too well founded, that the King's life was seriously menaced, and that he was, even in accepting the constitution, acting under compulsion, these northern and southern potentates entered into an agreement, the purport of which was, that a force of thirty-six thousand Russians and Swedes was to be conveyed from the Baltic to a point on the coast of Normandy, where they were to be disembarked and march direct to Paris, supported by a hostile demonstration from Spain and Piedmont on the side of the Pyrenees and Alps—a project obviously hopeless, if not supported by the forces of Austria and Prussia on the Rhine, and which the failure of the expedition to Varennes, and the subsequent course of events, caused to be entirely abandoned.¹

¹ Hard. i.
159, 163.
Cap. Eur.
i. 88, 89.

94.
Measures of
the emi-
grant no-
blesse.

Meanwhile the Comte d'Artois, and the emigrant nobility, taking counsel of nothing but their valour, generously resolving to risk everything to rescue the royal family of France from the dangers which threatened them, and relying on the open support and encouragement afforded them by the courts of Stockholm and St Petersburg, proceeded with the ardour and impetuosity which, in every period of the Revolution, have been the characteristics of their race. Numerous assemblages took place at Brussels, Coblentz, and Ettenheim : the Empress

Catherine, in a letter addressed to Marshal Broglie, which they ostentatiously published, manifested the warm interest which she took in their cause; horses and arms were purchased, and organised corps of noble adventurers already began to be formed on the right bank of the Rhine. Twelve thousand of those gallant nobles were soon in arms, chiefly in squadrons of cavalry. Transported with ardour at so many favourable appearances, the exiled princes addressed to Louis an open remonstrance, in which they strongly urged him to refuse his acceptance to the constitution which was about to be submitted to him; represented that all his former concessions had only induced impunity to every species of violence, and the despotism of the most abandoned persons in the kingdom; protested against any apparent acceptance which he might be compelled to give, and renewed the assurances of the intention of themselves and the Allied powers speedily to deliver him from his fetters.¹

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Sept. 10.

¹ Hard i.
152, 153,
165. Cap.
Eur. pend.
la Rév.
Franc. i.
169, 170.

The only point that remained in dispute between the Emperor and the French King was, the indemnities to be provided to the German princes and prelates who had been dispossessed by the decrees of the National Assembly; but on this point Leopold evinced a firmness worthy of the head of the Empire. Early in December he addressed to them a formal letter, in which he announced his own resolution, and that of the Diet, "to afford them every succour which the dignity of the imperial crown and the maintenance of the public constitution of the Empire required, if they did not obtain that complete restitution or indemnification which existing treaties provided." Notwithstanding this, however, the cabinets of Vienna and Berlin still entertained so confident an opinion that the differences with France would terminate amicably, and that Louis, now restored to his authority, would speedily do justice to the injured parties,² that they not only made no hostile preparations whatever, but with-

95.
Dispute
about the
indemnities
to the Ger-
man princes
and prelates.

² Hard. i.
169, 171.
Cap. i. 87.

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IX.

1791.

96.

Difficulties
and fears of
the Allies.

drew a large proportion of their troops from the Flemish provinces.

In truth, though they felt the necessity of taking some measures against the common dangers which threatened all established institutions with destruction, the Allied sovereigns had an undefined dread of the magical and unseen powers with which France might assail them, and pierce them to the heart through the revolt of their own subjects. The language held out by the National Assembly and its powerful orators, of war to the palace and peace to the cottage ; the hand of fraternity which they offered to extend to the disaffected in all countries who were inclined to throw off the yoke of oppression ; the seeds of sedition which its emissaries had so generally spread through the adjoining states, diffused an anxious feeling among the friends of order throughout the world, and inspired the dread that, by bringing up their forces to the vicinity of the infected districts, they might be seized with the contagion, and direct their first strokes against the power which commanded them. England, notwithstanding the energetic remonstrances of Mr Burke, was still reposing in fancied security ; and Catherine of Russia, solely bent on territorial aggrandisement, was almost entirely absorbed by the troubles of Poland, and the facilities which they afforded to her ambitious projects. Prussia, however anxious to espouse the cause of royalty, was unequal to a contest with revolutionary France : and Austria, under the pacific Leopold, had entirely abandoned her military projects since the throne of Louis had been nominally re-established after the state of thralldom immediately consequent upon the flight to Varennes had been relaxed. Accordingly, the protestation and manifesto contemplated in the agreement at Mantua never were issued, and the military preparations provided for by that treaty had not taken place. Of all the powers mentioned in the agreement, the Bishop of Spire, the Elector of Treves, and the Bishop of Strasburg, alone took up arms ;¹ and their feeble

¹ Cap. i. 99,
100. Lac.
ix. 24, 25,
26. Th. ii.
76, 77, 78.
Dum. 410.
Bot. i. 73,
75. Ann.
Reg. xxxiv.
86, 87.
Hard. i.
172, 180.

contingents, placed in the very front of danger, were dissolved at the first summons of the French government.

But it was no part of the policy of the ruling party at Paris to remain at peace. They felt, as they themselves expressed it, "that their Revolution could not stand still; it must advance and embrace other countries, or perish in their own." Indeed, the spirit of revolution is so nearly allied to that of political propagandism and military adventure, that it is seldom that the one exists without leading to the other. The same restless activity, the same contempt of danger, the same craving for excitation, are to be found in both. It is extremely difficult for the fervour excited by a successful revolt to subside till it is turned into the channel of military exploit. Citizens who have overturned established institutions, demagogues who have tasted of the intoxication of popular applause, working men who have felt the sweets of unbridled power, during the brief period which elapses before they fall under the yoke of despots of their own creation, are incapable of returning to the habits of pacific life. The unceasing toil, the obscure destiny, the humble enjoyments of laborious industry, seem intolerable to those who have shared in the glories of popular resistance; while the heart-stirring accompaniments, the licentious habits, the general plunder, the captivating glory of arms, make it appear the only employment worthy of their renown. The insecurity of property and fall of credit which invariably follow any considerable political convulsion, throw multitudes out of employment, and increase the necessity for some drain to carry off the tumultuous activity of the people. It has, accordingly, been often observed, that democratic states have, in every age, been the most warlike, and the most inclined to aggression upon their neighbours; and the reason must be the same in all periods—that revolutionary enterprise both awakens the passions, and induces the necessity which leads to external violence.¹

The party of the Girondists, who were at that period

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1791.

97.

The French
revolution-
ary party
resolve on
war.

¹ Mitford's
History of
Greece.
Sismondi's
Rep. Ital.

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IX.

1791.

98.

Debate on
the foreign
powers and
the emi-
grants.
Nov. 29.

the dominant one in France, was absolutely bent on war. The great object of their endeavours was to get the King involved in a foreign contest, in the hope, which subsequent events so completely justified, that their cause, being identified with that of national independence, would become triumphant. They expressed the utmost satisfaction at the firm tone adopted by the sovereign in the proclamation against the emigrants. "Let us raise ourselves," said Isnard, "on this occasion, to the real dignity of our situation ; let us speak to the ministers, to the King, to Europe in arms, with the firmness which becomes us : let us tell the former that we are not satisfied with their conduct—that they must make their election between public gratitude and the vengeance of the laws, and that by vengeance we mean death. Let us tell the King that his interest is to defend the constitution ; that he reigns by the people, and for the people ; that the nation is his sovereign, and that he is the subject of the law. Let us tell Europe that, if the French nation draws the sword, it will throw away the scabbard ; that it will not again seek it till crowned by the laurels of victory ; that if cabinets engage kings in a war against the people, we will rouse the people to mortal strife with sovereigns. Let us tell them, that the combats in which the people engage by order of despots resemble the strife of two friends under cloud of night, at the instigation of a perfidious emissary ; when the dawn appears, and they recognise each other, they throw away their arms, embrace with transport, and turn their vengeance against the author of their discord. Such will be the fate of our enemies, if, at the moment when their armies engage with ours, the light of philosophy strikes their eyes." ¹

Transported by these ideas, the Assembly *unanimously* adopted the proposed measure of addressing the throne on the necessity of an immediate declaration of war. Vau-blanc was the organ of their deputation. "No sooner," said he, "did the Assembly cast their eyes on the state of

¹ Hist. Parl.
xii. 389.
390. Th. ii.
38.

99.
Address of
the Assem-
bly on the
occasion.
Dec. 1.

the kingdom, than they perceived that the troubles which agitate it have their source in the criminal preparations of the French emigrants. Their audacity is supported by the German princes, who, forgetting the faith of treaties, openly encourage their warlike preparations, and compel counter-preparations on our part, which absorb the sums destined to the liquidation of the debt. It is your province to put a stop to these evils, and hold to foreign powers the language befitting a king of the French. Tell them, that wherever preparations of war are carried on, there France beholds nothing but enemies; that we will religiously observe peace on our side; that we will respect their laws, their usages, their constitutions; but that if they continue to favour the armaments destined against the French, France will bring into their bosoms not fire and sword, but freedom. It is for them to calculate the consequences of such a weakening of their people." The King promised to take the message of the Assembly into the most serious consideration, and a few days after came in person to the Chamber, and announced that he had notified to the Elector of Treves and the other Electors, that if they did not, before the 15th January, put an end to the military preparations in their states, he would regard them as enemies; and that he had written to the Emperor, to call upon him, as the head of the Empire, to prevent the disastrous consequences of a war. "If these remonstrances," he concluded, "are not attended to, nothing will remain but to declare war—a step which a people who have renounced the idea of conquest will never take without absolute necessity, but from which a generous and free nation will not shrink when called by the voice of honour and public safety." Loud applause followed these words; and it was already manifest that the revolutionary energy was turning into its natural channel, warlike achievement.¹

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1791.

Dec. 14.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xii. 395, 396.
Mig. i. 162.
Th. ii. 38.

These declarations were followed by serious preparations. Narbonne, a young man of the party of the Feuillants, of

CHAP.
IX.

1791.

100.

Prepara-
tions for
war, which
the Emperor
yet wished
to avoid.

high rank, but intimately connected, through Madame de Stael, whose confidence he enjoyed, with the liberal party, was appointed minister at war, and immediately set out for the frontiers. One hundred and fifty thousand men were put in immediate requisition, and twenty millions of francs (£800,000) voted for that purpose. Three armies were organised, one under the command of Rochambeau, one of Luckner, one of Lafayette. The Comte d'Artois and the Prince of Condé were accused of conspiring against the security of the state and of the constitution, and their estates put under sequestration. Finally, the Comte de Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII., not having obeyed the requisition to return to the kingdom within the appointed time, was deprived of his right to the regency. The Elector of Treves obeyed the requisition; but the Emperor of Austria, though naturally pacific, and totally unprepared for war, gave orders to his general, Marshal Bender, to defend the Elector if he was attacked, and insisted that the rights of the feudal lords should be re-established in Alsace. Meanwhile, the Imperial troops were put in motion: fifty thousand men were stationed in the Low Countries; six thousand in the Brisgau; thirty thousand ordered for Bohemia. Nevertheless, the Emperor Leopold was extremely averse to a contest, for which he was still unprepared, and which he was well aware was at variance with his interests. His object was to establish a congress, and adjust the disputed points with France in such a manner as might satisfy all parties. He was aware of the necessity of maintaining the constitutional system entire in its material parts, but wished to restore to the throne some of its lost prerogatives, and divide the legislature into two chambers—alterations which experience has proved it would have been well for France if she could have imposed on her turbulent and impassioned people.¹

Brissot was the decided advocate for war in the club of the Jacobins. His influence on that subject was long counterbalanced by that of Robespierre, who dreaded above all

¹ Bouillé,
299, 309.
Th. ii. 41.
Lac. i. 163.
Mig. i. 162.

things the accession of strength which his political opponents might receive from the command of the armies. Isnard there strongly supported the war party, and used every effort to carry that fervent body along with him. Drawing a sword which he brandished in his hand, he exclaimed, "Here, gentlemen, is our sword ; it will never cease to be victorious. The French people will raise a mighty shout, and all other people will re-echo its sound ; the earth will be covered with combatants, and the whole enemies of liberty will be effaced from the list of men."—"Beware," said Robespierre, in reply, "you who have so long guarded against the perfidy of the Court, of now becoming the unconscious instruments of its designs. Brissot is clear for war ; I ask you where are your armies, your fortresses, your magazines ? What ! shall we believe that the Court, which, in periods of tranquillity, is incessantly engaged in intrigues, will abstain from them when it obtains the lead of our armies ? I see clearly the signs of perfidy, not only in those who are to proclaim war, but in those who advise it. Every one must perceive that the efforts of the emigrants to rouse foreign powers are utterly nugatory. Are you to be the party, by a hasty measure, to compel them to adopt vigorous steps ? I affirm, without the fear of contradiction, that the blood of our soldiers is sold by traitors. The more I meditate on the chances of war, the more my mind is filled with the most gloomy presages. Already I see the men, who basely shed the blood of our fellow-citizens on the Champ de Mars, at the head of the armies. What guarantee am I offered against such appalling dangers ? The patriotism of Brissot and Condorcet ! I know not if it is true ; I know not if it is sincere ; but I know well that it is tardy. I have seen them worship M. Lafayette ; they made a show of resistance at the time of his odious success ; but they have since upheld his fortunes, and evinced but too plainly that they were participant in his designs against the public weal." ¹

CHAP.
IX.1791.
101.It is opposed
by Robes-
pierre.
29th Dec.

¹ Journal
des Jaco-
bins, 18 and
29 Dec. Lac.
i. 216, 217.
Hist. Parl.
xii. 363.

CHAP.
IX.

1791.

102.

Violent de-
clamations
in the Na-
tional As-
sembly in
favour of
war.

But the passion for war was so strong that all the perseverance and talents of Robespierre at length failed in arresting it. Soon after, repeated philippics, in still more violent language, were pronounced in the Assembly by Brissot and Vergniaud against the European powers, which, even according to the admission of the French themselves, "were so many declarations of war, and imprudent provocations, which were calculated to place the French in hostility with all Europe." "The information of Brissot, the profound political views which he developes, are so entirely at variance with the sophisms with which his speech abounds," says Jomini, "that one would be inclined to suppose he had been the secret agent of the English government, if we did not know that his errors at that period were shared by all the most enlightened men of France. An orator, enthusiastic even to madness, was alone capable of bringing on his country, by such harangues, the hatred of all the European chiefs. No paraphrase can convey an adequate idea of the violence of the leaders of the Assembly at that period: their speeches must be bequeathed entire to posterity, as frightful proofs of what can be effected by an ill-directed enthusiasm and spirit of party."¹

¹ Jom. i.
193. Pièces
Just. i. 7, 8,
and 9.

103.
Violent
Speech of
Brissot,
Dec. 29.

"You are about," said Brissot, on 29th December 1791, "to judge the cause of kings: show yourselves worthy of so august a function: place yourselves above them, or you will be unworthy of freedom. The French Revolution has overturned all former diplomacy: though the people are not yet everywhere free, governments are no longer able to stifle their voice. The sentiments of the English on our Revolution are not doubtful: they behold in it the best guarantee for their own freedom. It is highly improbable that the British government will ever venture, even if it had the means, to attack the French Revolution; that improbability is converted into a certainty, when we consider the divisions of their Parliament, the weight of their public debt, the declining condition of their Indian

affairs. England would never hesitate between its king and its liberty—between the repose of which it has so much need, and a contest which would probably occasion its ruin. Austria is as little to be feared : her soldiers, whom her princes in vain seek to estrange from the people, remember that it is among them that they find their friends, their relations ; and they will not separate their cause from that of freedom. The successor of Frederick, if he has any prudence, will hesitate to ruin for ever, in combating our forces, an army which, once destroyed, will never be restored. In vain would the ambition of Russia interfere with our Revolution ; a new revolution in Poland would arrest her arms, and render Warsaw the centre of freedom to the east of Europe. Search the map of the world, you will in vain look for a power which France has any reason to dread. If any foreign states exist inclined for war, we must get the start of them. He who is anticipated is already half vanquished. If they are only making a pretence of hostile preparations, we must unmask them, and in so doing proclaim to the world their impotence. That act of a great people is what will put the seal to our Revolution. War has now become necessary : France is bound to undertake it to maintain her honour : she would be for ever disgraced if a few thousand rebels or emigrants could overawe the organs of the law. War is to be regarded as a public blessing. The only evil you have to apprehend is, that it should not arise, and that you should lose the opportunity of finally crushing the insolence of the emigrants. Till you take that decisive step, they will never cease to deceive you by diplomatic falsehood. It is no longer with governments we must treat, it is with their subjects.”¹

“The mask is at length fallen,” said the same orator on the 17th January 1792. “Your real enemy is declared ; Marshal Bender has revealed his name—it is the Emperor. The Electors were mere names, put forward to conceal the real mover. You may now despise the emigrants ;

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IX.
1792.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xii. 415.
Dec. 19.
Jom. i.
Pièces Just.
No. 7, 299.

104.
And again
on Jan. 17,
1792.

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1792.

the Electors are no longer worthy of your resentment : fear has prostrated them at your feet. You must anticipate his hostility. Now is the time to show the sincerity of your declaration, a hundred times repeated, that you are resolved to have freedom or death. Death ! you have no reason to fear it—consider your own situation and that of the Emperor—your constitution is an eternal anathema against absolute thrones : all kings must hate it ; it incessantly acts as their accuser ; it daily pronounces their sentence : it seems to say to each, ‘ To-morrow you will not exist, or exist only by the tolerance of the people.’ I will not say to the Emperor with your committee, ‘ Will you engage not to attack France or its independence ?’ but I will say, ‘ You have formed a league against France, and therefore I will attack you !’ and that immediate attack is just, is necessary, is commanded alike by imperious circumstances and your oaths.” “ The French,” said Fauchet, on the same day, “ after having conquered their own freedom, are the natural allies of all free people. All treaties with despots are null in law, and cannot be maintained in fact, without involving the destruction of our Revolution. We have no longer occasion for ambassadors or consuls ; they are only titled spies. When others wish our alliance, let them conquer their freedom ; till then, we will treat them as pacific savages. Let us have no war of aggression ; but war with the princes who conspire on our frontier with Leopold, who seeks to undermine our liberties : cannon are our negotiators, bayonets and millions of freemen our ambassadors.”¹

¹ Hist. Parl. xii. 9, 11. Jour. i. 323, 324, 319. Pièces Just. No. 7.

105.
Extraordi-
nary efforts
of Brissot
and the
Girondists
to force on
a war.

Brissot was resolved, at all hazards, to have a war with Austria : he was literally haunted day and night by the idea of a secret Austrian cabinet which governed the Court, and was incessantly thwarting the designs of the revolutionists. If the Girondists could have reconciled themselves to the King, they would have disarmed Europe, turned the emigrants into ridicule, and maintained peace.

But Brissot and Dumourier were resolved by one means or other to break it. The former went so far as to propose that some French soldiers should be disguised as Austrian hussars, and make a nocturnal attack on the French villages : upon receipt of the intelligence, a motion was to have been made in the Assembly, and war, it was expected, would have been instantly decreed in the enthusiasm of the moment. His anxiety for its commencement was indescribable : de Graves, Clavière, and Roland hesitated, on account of the immense responsibility of such an undertaking : but Dumourier and he uniformly declared that nothing but a war could consolidate the freedom of France, disclose the enemies of the constitution, and unmask the perfidy of the Court. Their whole leisure time was employed in studying maps of the Low Countries, and meditating schemes of aggrandisement with reference to that favourite object of French ambition.¹

CHAP.
IX.

1792.

: Dumont,
Souv. de
Mirabeau,
410, 411.

When such was the language of the leading men in the French government and National Assembly, it is of little moment to detail the negotiations and mutual recriminations which led to the commencement of hostilities by the French government. The French complained, and apparently with justice, that numerous bodies of emigrants were assembled, and organised into military bodies at Coblenz, and on other points on the frontier : that the Elector of Treves and the other lesser powers had evaded all demands for their dispersion : that Austrian troops were rapidly defiling towards the Brisgau and the Rhine, and that no satisfactory explanation of these movements had been given. The Imperialists retorted, with not less reason, that the French affiliated societies were striving to spread sedition through all the conterminous states : that Piedmont, Switzerland, and Belgium, were agitated by their exertions : that the Parisian orators and journals daily published invitations to all other people to revolt, and offered them the hand of fraternity if they did so : that

106.
Mutual
recrimina-
tions, which
lead to war.

April 20.

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IX.

1792.

Avignon and the Venaissin had, without the shadow of legal right, been annexed to France; and the Catholics and nobles in Alsace deprived of their possessions, honours, and privileges, in violation of the treaty of Westphalia. The ultimatum of Austria was, that the monarchy should be re-established on the footing on which it was placed by the royal ordinance of 23d June 1789; that the property of the church in Alsace should be restored; the fiefs of that province, with the seignorial rights, given back to the German princes, and Avignon, with the Venaissin, to the Pope. These propositions were rejected; and Dumourier, who had now succeeded to the portfolio of foreign affairs, earnestly pressed the French King to commence hostilities, in the hope of being able to overrun Flanders before any considerable Austrian force could be brought up to its support.¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xiv. 30, 36.
Jom. i. 205.
Pièces Just.
No. 13.
Mig. i. 167.

107.
Universal
desire for
war in
France.

In urging the King to this step, Dumourier acted in conformity with nearly the unanimous wish of the nation. All classes were equally anxious for war. The Royalists hoped everything from the invasion of the German powers: the superiority of their discipline, the strength of their armies, made them anticipate an immediate march to Paris, and the final extinction of the Revolution, from which they had suffered so much. The Constitutionalists, worn out with the painful struggle they had so long maintained with their domestic enemies, expected to regain their ascendancy by the influence of the army, the augmented expenditure of government during war, and the experienced necessity of military discipline. The Democrats eagerly desired the excitement and tumult of campaigns, from all the chances of which they hoped to derive advantage. Victorious, they looked to the establishment of their principles in foreign states: vanquished, they anticipated the downfall of the Constitutionalists, and their own installation in their stead.² Such has been human nature in periods of excitement from the begin-

² Lac. i. 228.
Th. 47, 49.

ning of the world.—“Facilior inter malos consensus ad bellum, quam in pace ad concordiam.” *

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IX.

Pressed alike by his friends, his ministers, and his enemies, Louis was at length compelled to take the fatal step. On the 20th April he repaired to the Assembly, and after a long exposition, by Dumourier, of the grounds of complaint against Austria—the secret tenor of the conferences of Mantua, Reichenbach, and Pilnitz; the coalition of kings formed to arrest the progress of the Revolution; the open protection given to the troops of the emigrants, and the intolerable conditions of the ultimatum—pronounced with a tremulous voice these irrevocable words:—“You have heard, gentlemen, the result of my negotiations with the court of Vienna; they are conformable to the sentiments more than once expressed to me by the National Assembly, and confirmed by the great majority of the kingdom. All prefer a war to the continuance of outrages on the national honour, or menaces to the national safety. I have exhausted all the means of pacification in my power: I now come, in terms of the constitution, to propose to the Assembly, that we should declare war against the King of Hungary and Bohemia.” This declaration was received in silence, interrupted only by partial applause. How unanimous soever the members were in approving the declaration of the King, they were too deeply impressed with the solemnity and grandeur of the occasion, to give vent to any noisy ebullition of feeling. In the evening, at a meeting specially convened for the occasion, war was almost unanimously agreed to.¹ A large proportion of the most enlightened men in the Assembly, including Condorcet, Clavière, Roland and de Graves, disapproved of this step, and yet voted for it—a striking proof of the manner in which, in troubled times, the more

1792.
108.
The King
yields,
against his
own judg-
ment.

April 20.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xiv. 34, 36.
Dumont, iv.
18. Mig. i.
168. Lac. ii.
228. Th. ii.
75, 76.

* “Consent is easier among the bad for war, than in peace for concord.”—TACITUS, *Hist.* i. 54.

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IX.

1792.
109.
He acted
contrary to
his convic-
tion in do-
ing so.

moderate and rational party are swept along by the daring measures of more vehement and reckless men.

The King was well aware that the interests of his family could not be benefited, but necessarily must be injured, by the events of the war, whatever they might be. Victorious, the people would be more imperious in their demands, and more difficult for the Crown to govern; vanquished, he would be accused of treachery, and made to bear the load of public indignation. So strongly was he impressed by these considerations, and so thoroughly convinced that his conduct, in agreeing to this war, might hereafter be made the subject of accusation at the trial which he was well aware was approaching, that he drew up a record of the proceedings of the council, where he delivered his opinions against it; and after getting the instrument signed by all the ministers, deposited it in the iron closet, which about this time he had secretly made in the wall of his apartments in the Tuileries, to contain the most important papers in his possession—both those upon which a charge might be founded against him, and those calculated to support his defence if afterwards brought to trial. The closet, with its contents, was subsequently revealed by the treachery of the blacksmith who was employed to make it. Thus commenced, against the will of the very monarch who declared it, the greatest, the most bloody, and the most interesting war which has agitated mankind since the fall of the Roman empire. Rising from small beginnings, it at length involved the world in its conflagration; involving the interests, and rousing the passions of every class of the people, it brought unprecedented armies into the field, and was carried on with a degree of exasperation hitherto unknown in civilised times.¹

¹ M. Cam-
pan, ii. 222.
Th. ii. 73.

The intelligence of the declaration of war was received with joy by all France, and by none more so than by those districts which were destined to suffer most from

its ultimate effects. The Jacobins beheld in it the termination of their apprehensions occasioned by the emigrants, and the uncertain conduct of the King. The Constitutionalists hoped that the common danger would unite all the factions which now distracted the commonwealth, while the field of battle would mow down the turbulent characters whom the Revolution had brought forth. A few of the Feuillants only reproached the Assembly with having violated the constitution, and begun a war of aggression, which could not fail in the end to terminate fatally for France. It communicated a new impulse to the public mind, already so strongly excited. The districts, the municipalities, and the clubs, wrote addresses to the Assembly, congratulating them on having vindicated the national honour; arms were prepared, pikes forged, gifts provided, and the nation seemed impatient only to receive its invaders. But the efforts of patriotism, strong as an auxiliary to a military force, are seldom able to supply its place. The first combats were all unsuccessful to the French arms; and it will more than once appear in the sequel, that, had the Allies acted with more decision, and pressed on to Paris before military experience had been superadded to the enthusiasm of their adversaries, there can be no doubt that the war might have been terminated in a single campaign.¹

The real intentions of the Allies at this juncture, and the moderation of the views with which they were inspired in regard to the war, are well illustrated by a note communicated by the cabinets of Berlin and Vienna to the Danish government—in which, renouncing all idea of interfering in the internal affairs of France, they limit their views, even after war had been commenced by France, to the formation of a bulwark against the revolutionary principles of the French Republic, and the obtaining of indemnities for the German princes. This note

CHAP.
IX.

1792.

110.

Universal
joy which
the declara-
tion of war
diffused in
France.¹Mig. i. 169.
Toul. ii. 121.
Th. ii. 77,
79.111.
Real views
of the Allies
at this
period.
May 12.

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IX.

1792.

Feb. 7.

March 16.

112.
Accession
of the
Emperor
Francis to
the throne
of Austria.

is the more remarkable, that it announces * precisely the principles which, proclaimed two-and-twenty years afterwards, in the plains of Champagne, by the Allied sovereigns, brought the war to a triumphant conclusion. In contemplation of the approaching struggle, a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, had been, on 7th February 1792, concluded between the sovereigns of Sweden and Austria. But both of the contracting parties did not long survive this measure. On March 1st, Leopold died, leaving his son, Francis II., to succeed to his extensive dominions; and a fortnight after Gustavus King of Sweden was assassinated at a masked ball at Stockholm. It seemed as if Providence was preparing a new race of actors for the momentous scenes which were about to be performed.

Leopold expired of a mortification in the stomach, induced by amorous excesses, to which he was peculiarly addicted. He was succeeded by his son FRANCIS, then hardly twenty-four years of age, whose reign was the most eventful, long the most disastrous, and ultimately the most glorious in the Austrian annals. He had been brought up at Florence, at the court where his father exerted the philosophic beneficence of his disposition; and had married, four years before, the Princess Elizabeth of Würtemberg, who died in childbed on the 8th February 1790; after which he married, in the same year, the Princess Theresa of Naples. The first measures

* "The object of the alliance is twofold. The first object concerns the rights of the dispossessed princes, and the dangers of the propagation of revolutionary principles; the second, the maintenance of the fundamental principles of the French monarchy. The first object is sufficiently explained by its very announcement; the second is not as yet susceptible of any proper determination. The Allied powers have unquestionably no right to insist, from a great and independent power such as France, that everything should be re-established as it was formerly; or that it shall adopt such and such modifications in its government. It follows from this, that they will recognise as legal any modification of the monarchical government which the King, when enjoying unrestrained liberty, shall agree to, in concert with the legal representatives of the nation. The forces to be employed in this enterprise must be proportioned to its magnitude, and to the resistance which may probably be experienced. With a view to the arrangement of these objects, the city of Vienna is proposed as a

of his reign were popular and judicious : Kaunitz, long the able and tried director of the Imperial cabinet, was continued prime-minister, and with him were joined Marshal Laschy, the old friend of Leopold, and Count Francis Colloredo, his own former preceptor. He suppressed those articles in the journals in which he was loaded with praise, observing, "It is by my future conduct that I am alone to be judged worthy of praise or blame." Leopold, at his accession, had ordered all the anonymous and secret communications with which a young prince is usually assailed, to be burned ; Francis went a step further—he issued a positive order against any of them being received. When the list of pensioners was submitted to his inspection, he with his own hand erased the name of his mother, observing that it was unbecoming that she should be dependent on the bounty of the State. With such bright colours did the dawn of this eventful and glorious reign arise.¹

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¹ Hard. i.
255, 267.
Cap. l'Eur.
pend. la
Rév. i. 157.

Still Great Britain preserved a strict neutrality. During the whole of 1792, pregnant, as we shall immediately see, with great events, and which saw France brought to within a hairbreadth of destruction, no attempt was made to take advantage of her weakness, to wreak on that unhappy country the vengeance of national rivalry. England did not, in the hour of France's distress, retaliate upon her the injuries inflicted in the American

113.
Great Britain still strictly neutral till the 10th August made her prepare for war.

convenient station ; but when the armies are assembled, a congress must be established nearer France than that city, followed by a formal declaration of the objects which the Allies have in view in their intervention."—HARD. i. 391, 392.

The same principles were announced by Frederick William to Prince Hardenberg, in a secret and confidential conversation which that statesman had with his sovereign on July 12, 1792. He declared "that France should not be dismembered in any of its parts ; that the Allies had no intention of interfering in its internal government ; but that, as an indispensable preliminary to the settlement of the public disturbances, the King should be set at liberty, and reinvested with his full authority ; that the ministers of religion should be restored to their altars, and the dispossessed proprietors to their estates, and that France should pay the expenses of the war."—HARD. i. 400.

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¹ Ann. Reg.
xxxiv. 181.

War. This fact was so notorious, that it was constantly admitted by the French themselves.¹ "There is but one nation," said M. Kersaint in the National Assembly, on Sept. 18, 1792, "whose neutrality on the affairs of France is decidedly pronounced, and that is England." But with the progress of events, the policy of Great Britain necessarily underwent a change. The 10th of August came, the throne was overturned, and the royal family thrown into captivity; the massacres of September stained Paris with blood; and the victories of Dumourier rolled back to the Rhine the tide of foreign invasion. These great events inspired the revolutionary party with such extravagant expectations that the continuance of peace on the part of England became impossible. In the frenzy of their democratic fury, they used language, and adopted measures, plainly incompatible with the peace or tranquillity of other states. A Jacobin club of twelve hundred members was established at Chamberry, in Savoy, and a hundred of its most active members were selected as travelling missionaries, "armed with the torch of reason and liberty, for the purpose of enlightening the Savoyards on their regeneration and imprescriptible rights."²

Oct. 1792.
² Cap. l'Eur.
pend. la
Rég. i. 191,
211. Ann.
Rég. xxxiv.
181, 185.

114.
French sys-
tem of pro-
pagandism.

Nov. 21.

War was declared by the National Assembly against the King of Sardinia on 15th September 1792. An address was voted by the club just referred to, to the French Convention, as "the legislators of the world," and received by them on the 20th October 1792. They ordered it to be translated into the English, Spanish, and German languages. The rebellious Savoyards next constituted a Convention, in imitation of that of France, and offered to incorporate themselves with the great Republic. On 21st November, a deputation from Savoy was received by the National Assembly, and welcomed with the most rapturous applause. The president addressed the deputies in a speech, in which he predicted the speedy destruction of all thrones, and the regeneration of the

human race ; and assured the deputies, that “regenerated France would make common cause with all those who are resolved to shake off the yoke, and obey only themselves.” The French Convention was not slow in accepting the proffered dominion of Savoy : the committee to whom it was remitted to consider the subject reported, “that all considerations, physical, moral, and political, call for the incorporation of that country : all attempts to connect it with Piedmont are fruitless ; the Alps eternally force it back into the domains of France ; the order of nature would be violated if they were to live under different laws ;” and the Assembly unanimously united Savoy with the French Republic, under the name of the Department of Mont Blanc. The seizure of this important province was immediately followed by that of Nice with its territory, and Monaco, which were formed into the department of the Maritime Alps. “Let us not fear,” said the reporter who spoke the opinion of the Convention with only one dissentient voice, “that this new incorporation will become a source of discord. It adds nothing to the hate of oppressors against the French Revolution ; it adds only to the means of the power by which we shall break their league. The die is thrown : *we have rushed into the career : all governments are our enemies*—all people are our friends : we must be destroyed, or they shall be free : and the axe of liberty, after having prostrated thrones, shall fall on the head of whoever wishes to restore their ruins.”¹

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Oct. 27.

¹ Hist. Parl.
vol. xx. p.
384, 395.
Ann. Reg.
xxxiv. 139.
Bot. i. 88.

Italy was the next object of attack. “Piedmont,” said Brissot in his report on Genoa, “must be free. Your sword must not be returned to its scabbard before all the subjects of your enemy are free, before you are encircled by a girdle of republics.” To facilitate such a work, a French fleet cast anchor in the bay of Genoa ; a Jacobin club was established in that city, where the French commanders assisted, and from which adulatory addresses were voted to the French Convention : while

115.
French at-
tack on
Italy, Ge-
nova, and
Germany.

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Jan. 14,
1793.

Kellermann, on assuming the command of the army of the Alps, informed his soldiers, that "he had received orders to conquer Rome, and that these orders should be obeyed." Basseville, the French ambassador in the Eternal City, was so active in endeavouring to stimulate the people to insurrection, that at length, on the 14th January 1793, when proceeding in his carriage to one of his assemblies, he was seized by the mob, at whom he had discharged a pistol, and murdered in the streets. This atrocious action naturally excited the most violent indignation in the Convention, and a decree was passed authorising the executive to take the most summary measures of vengeance. Nor was Switzerland more fortunate in avoiding the revolutionary tempest. Geneva did not long escape. A French army, under General Montesquion, approached its walls, and the senate of Berne made great preparations for resistance ; but the strength of the democratic party in Geneva made it impossible to provide for its defence in an effectual manner, and the excitement in the whole Pays de Vaud rendered it doubtful whether the first cannon-shot would not be the signal for insurrection along the whole Lemman lake. Still, General Montesquion hesitated in commencing hostilities, as the mountaineers of Berne were unanimous in their determination to resist, and they could bring twenty thousand admirable soldiers into the field. Brissot, however, in a laboured report on the subject, declared "that the revolution must take place there, or our own will retrograde ;" and insisted on the Swiss troops being withdrawn from the city, that is, on its being delivered over unarmed to the revolutionary faction. To this humiliating condition the Swiss submitted ; and in consequence, on 27th December, the revolutionists overturned the government, and delivered over that celebrated city to the French troops. Nor were the small German princes neglected :¹ the Elector Palatine, though all along remaining neutral, had his property on the Lower Rhine put under sequestra-

¹ Ann. Reg.
xxxiv, 153.
Bot. i. 96,
97, 237.

tion, and considerable portions of the territories of Hesse-Darmstadt, Wied-Runchet, and Nassau-Sarbrook, were annexed to the neighbouring departments of France.

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At length, on 19th November, a decree was unanimously passed by the Convention, which openly placed the French Republic at war with all established governments. It was in these terms : “ The National Convention declares, in the name of the French nation, that it will grant *fraternity and assistance to all people who wish to recover their liberty*; and it charges the executive power to send the necessary orders to the generals, to give succour to such people, and to defend those citizens who have suffered, or may suffer, in the cause of liberty.” Brissot himself, at a subsequent period, styled this decree “ absurd, impolitic, and justly exciting the disquietude of foreign cabinets.” And this was followed up, on 15th December, by a decree so extraordinary and unprecedented, that no abstract of its contents can convey an idea of the spirit of the original.¹

116.
French declaration of war against all nations. Nov. 19.

¹ Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 153.
Hist. Par. xx. 364.
Brissot à ses Commettans, 88. London edition.

“ The National Convention, faithful to the principles of the sovereignty of the people, which will not permit them to acknowledge any institutions militating against it, decrees as follows :—1. In all those countries which *are or shall be* occupied by the armies of the French Republic, the generals shall immediately proclaim, in the name of the French people, the abolition *of all existing imposts and contributions* of tithes, feudal and manorial rights, all real and personal servitude, and generally of all privileges. 2. They shall proclaim the *sovereignty of the people, and the suppression of all existing authorities*; they shall convoke the people to nominate a provisional government, and shall cause this decree to be translated into the language of that country. 3. All agents, or officers of the former government, military or civil, and all individuals reputed noble, shall be ineligible to any place in such provisional government on the first election. 4. The generals shall forthwith place under the safeguard

117.
Decree of the Convention. Dec. 15.

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of the French Republic all property, movable or immovable, belonging to the treasury, the prince, his adherents and attendants, and to all public bodies and communities, both civil, religious, &c. 9. The provisional government shall cease as soon as the inhabitants, after having declared the sovereignty of the people, shall have organised a free and popular form of government. 10. In case the common interest should require the further continuance of the troops of the Republic on the foreign territory, the Republic shall make the necessary arrangements for their subsistence. 11. The French nation declares that it will *treat as enemies the people who, refusing or renouncing liberty and equality, are desirous of preserving their prince and privileged castes, or of entering into an accommodation with them.* The nation promises and engages not to lay down its arms, until the sovereignty and liberty of the people on whose territory the French army shall have entered shall be established, and not to consent to any arrangement or treaty with the princes and privileged persons so dispossessed, with whom the Republic is at war.”¹

¹ Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 155. Hist. Parl. xxi. 350, 352.

118.
Violent instructions to their generals by the French Convention.

This decree was immediately transmitted to the generals on the frontier, with a commentary and explanatory notes, more violent, if possible, than the original. To assist them in their labours, commissaries were appointed with all the armies, whose peculiar duty it was to superintend the revolutionising of the conquered districts. They were enjoined “not to allow even a shadow of the ancient authorities to remain ;” and “not only to encourage the writings destined for popular instruction, the patriotic societies, and all the establishments consecrated to the propagation of liberty, but themselves to have immediate communication with the people, and counteract by frequent explanations all the falsehoods by which evil-minded persons could lead them astray.”* The decree of 19th

* The ablest writers of France fully admit the insane desire for foreign warfare which at this period had seized on its government. “Every one,”

November was accompanied by an exposition, addressed to the general of every army in France, containing a schedule as regularly digested as any by which the ordinary routine of business in any department of the State could be digested. Each commander was furnished with a general blank formula of a letter for all the nations of the world, beginning with these words, "The people of France to the people of —, greeting. We are come to expel your tyrants." And when it was proposed in the National Convention, on the motion of M. Baraillon, to declare expressly that the decree of 19th November was confined to the nations with whom they were at war, the motion was negatived by a large majority.¹ *

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xxxiv. 1310,
1311. Hist.
Parl. xxi.
352, 353.

These unprecedented and alarming proceedings, joined to the rapid increase and treasonable language of the Jacobin societies in Great Britain, excited a very general feeling of disquietude there. The army and navy had both been *reduced* in the early part of the year 1792, in pursuance of a recommendation from the throne, and the English government had resisted the most earnest solicitations to join the confederacy against France. Even after the king of that country was overturned on the 10th August, the British ministry enjoined their ambassador, before leaving the capital where there was no longer a stable government, to renew their assurances of neutrality;

119.
Alarm ex-
cited in
Great Bri-
tain by these
proceedings.

says Marshal St Cyr, "of the least foresight, at the close of 1792, was aware of the dangers which menaced the Republic, and was lost in astonishment, I will not say at the imprudence, but the folly of the Convention, which, instead of seeking to diminish the number of its enemies, seemed resolved to augment them by successive insults, not merely against all kings, but against every existing government. A blind and groundless confidence had taken possession of their minds; they thought only of dethroning kings by their decrees, leaving the armics on which the Republic depended in a state of entire destitution."—St Cyr, *Mémoires*, i. 19, 20.

* "LE PEUPLE FRANÇAIS AU PEUPLE —."

"Frères et amis ! Nous avons conquis la liberté, et nous la maintiendrons ; notre union et notre force en sont les garans. Nous vous offrons de vous faire jouir de ce bien inestimable qui vous a toujours appartenu, et que vos oppresseurs n'ont pu vous ravir sans crime. Nous sommes venus pour chasser vos tyrans : ils ont fui : montrez-vous hommes libres, et nous vous garantirons de leur vengeance, de leurs projets, et de leur retour.

"Dès ce moment la République Française proclame la suppression de tous

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—
1792.

and the French minister, M. le Brun, declared, that the French government were confident that “the British cabinet would not at this decisive moment depart from the justice, moderation, and impartiality which it had hitherto manifested.” But when the National Convention began openly to aim at revolutionising all other countries, their proceedings were looked upon with distrust; and this was heightened into aversion when they showed a disposition to include England among the states to whose rebellious subjects they extended the hand of fraternity.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
xxxiv. 163,
165; and
State Pa-
pers, 327.

120.
Opening of
the Scheldt.

Nov. 16.

The London Corresponding, and four other societies, on 7th November, presented an address, filled with the most revolutionary sentiments, to the National Assembly, which was received with the warmest expressions of approbation; and so strongly did the belief prevail in France that England was on the verge of a convulsion, that on the 21st November, the president, Abbé Grégoire, declared that these “respectable islanders, once our masters in the social art, have now become our disciples; and, treading in our steps, soon will the high-spirited English strike a blow which shall resound to the extremity of Asia.” At the same period the French committed an act of aggression on the Dutch, then in alliance with Great Britain, which necessarily brought them into collision with the latter power. By the treaty of Münster, it had been

vos magistrats civils et militaires, de toutes les autorités qui vous ont gouvernés; elle proclame en ce pays l'abolition de tous les impôts que vous supportez, sous quelque forme qu'ils existent—des droits féodaux, de la gabelle, des péages, des octrois, des droits d'entrée et de sortie, de la dîme, des droits de chasse et de pêche exclusifs; des corvées de la noblesse, et généralement de toute espèce de contributions et de servitude dont vous avez été chargés par vos oppresseurs. Elle abolit aussi parmi vous toute corporation nobiliaire, sacerdotale, et autres, toutes prérogatives, tous privilèges contraires à l'égalité. Vous êtes dès ce moment frères et amis, tous citoyens, tous égaux en droit, et tous appelés également à défendre, à gouverner, et à servir votre patrie.

“Formez-vous sur-le-champ en assemblées de communes; hâtez-vous d'établir vos administrations provisoires: les agens de la République Française se concerteront avec elles, pour assurer votre bonheur et la fraternité qui doit exister désormais entre nous.” *Proclamation—Le Peuple Français à tous les Peuples—adoptée par la Convention, 15 Décembre 1792; Histoire Parlementaire de France, xxi. 352, 353.*

provided that the Scheldt was to remain for ever closed ; but the career of conquest having brought the French armies to Antwerp, a decree of the Convention was passed on 16th November, ordering the French commander-in-chief to open the Scheldt : and by another decree, passed on the same day, the French troops were ordered to pursue the fugitive Austrians into the Dutch territory. These directions were immediately carried into effect by a French squadron, in defiance of the Dutch authorities, sailing up the Scheldt to assist in the siege of the citadel of Antwerp. The Convention did not attempt to justify these violations of subsisting treaties on any grounds recognised by the law of nations, but contended, “ that treaties extorted by cupidity, and yielded by despotism, could not bind the free and enfranchised Belgians.”¹ What rendered this aggression altogether inexcusable was, that the French had, only eight years before, viz. in 1784, interfered to prevent a similar opening of the Scheldt, when attempted by Austria, then mistress of the Low Countries, and had succeeded in resisting that aggression upon the ground of its violating the rights of the United Provinces, as established by the treaty of 1731.¹

In these alarming circumstances the English militia were called out, the Tower was put in a state of defence, and parliament summoned for the 13th December. In the speech from the throne, the perilous nature of the new principles of interference with other states, proclaimed and acted upon by the French rulers, were strongly pointed out. “ I have carefully observed,” said the King, “ a strict neutrality in the present war on the Continent, and have uniformly abstained from any interference in the internal affairs of France ; but it is impossible to see, without the most serious uneasiness, the strong and increasing indications which have there appeared, of an intention to excite disturbances in other countries, to disregard the rights of neutral nations, and to pursue views of conquest and aggrandisement, as well as to adopt

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¹ Le Brun's Memorial to the Convention. Ann. Reg. xxxiii. 137, 165 ; and State Papers, 344, 346 ; and xxxiv. 173. Ségur, ii. 78, 79.

121. Preparations for war in England, and ultimatum of Lord Grenville on the part of its government.

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towards my allies the States-General, who have observed the same neutrality with myself, measures which are neither conformable to the law of nations nor to the stipulations of existing treaties." An angry correspondence, in consequence, ensued between the British cabinet and the French ambassador, which, having led to no satisfactory result, the armaments of England continued without intermission, and corresponding preparations were made in the French harbours. "England," said Lord Grenville, in a note to M. Chauvelin the French envoy, "never will consent that France should arrogate to herself the power of annulling at pleasure, and under cover of a pretended natural right, of which she makes herself the sole judge, the political system of Europe, established by solemn treaties, and guaranteed by the consent of all the powers. This government will also never see with indifference, that France shall make herself, either directly or indirectly, sovereign of the Low Countries, or general arbitress of the rights and liberties of Europe. If France is really desirous of maintaining friendship and peace with England, let her renounce her views of aggression and aggrandisement, and confine herself within her own territory, without insulting other governments, disturbing their tranquillity, or violating their rights."¹

¹ Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 168, 178; and State Papers, No. 1.

122.
Answer of the French envoy on that of France.

² Memorial by Le Brun, Ann. Reg. xxxiv. 174.

To this it was replied by the French envoy—"The design of the Convention has never been to engage itself to make the cause of some foreign individuals the cause of the whole French nation : but when a people, enslaved by a despot, shall have had the courage to break its chains : when this people, restored to liberty, shall be constituted in a manner to make clearly heard the expression of the general will : when that general will shall call for the assistance and fraternity of the French nation, it is then that the decree of the 19th will find its natural application ; and this cannot appear strange to any one."²

The intentions of Great Britain at this period, in

regard to France, and the line of conduct which, in conjunction with her allies, she had chalked out for herself before the war was hurried on by the execution of the King, cannot be better illustrated than by reference to an official despatch from Lord Grenville to the British ambassador at St Petersburg, on the subject of the proposed confederation against the French Republic. From this important document it appears that England laid it down as the basis of the alliance, that the French should be left entirely at liberty to arrange their government and internal concerns for themselves ; and that the efforts of the Allies should be limited to preventing their interference with other states, or extending their conquests or propagandism beyond their own frontier.^{1*}

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123.
Real views
of Great
Britain at
this period.
Dec. 29.¹ Parl. Hist.
xxxiv.1313,
1314.

But though these were the views of the English cabinet, very different ideas prevailed with the rulers of French affairs. The determination of the French government to spread their principles of revolution in England, was strongly manifested in a circular letter, addressed by Monge, the minister of marine, to the inhabitants of the French seaports, on 31st December 1792, more than a month before the declaration of war. "The King and English parliament," said he, "wish to make war upon us ; but will the English republicans suffer it ? Already these freemen testify the repugnance which they feel at

124.
War de-
clared by
France.
Feb. 3,
1793.

* In this important state paper, Lord Grenville observes—"The two leading points on which such explanation will naturally turn are, the line of conduct to be pursued previous to the commencement of hostilities, with a view, if possible, to avert them : and the nature and amount of the forces which the powers engaged in this concert might be enabled to use, supposing such extremities unavoidable. With respect to the first, it appears on the whole—subject, however, to future consideration and discussion with the other powers—that the most advisable step to be taken would be, that sufficient explanation should be had with the powers at war with France, in order to enable those not hitherto engaged in the war to propose to that country terms of peace. That these terms should be the withdrawing their arms within the limits of the French territory, the abandoning their conquests, the rescinding any acts injurious to the sovereignty or rights of any other nation, and the giving, in some unequivocal manner, a pledge of their intention no longer to foment troubles or to excite disturbances against other governments. In return for these stipulations, the different powers of Europe, who should be parties to this measure, might engage

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bearing arms against their brethren the French. We will fly to their assistance, we will make a descent in that island, we will hurl thither fifty thousand caps of liberty, we will plant among them the sacred tree, and hold out our arms to our republican brethren. The tyranny of their government shall soon be destroyed." When such was the language used by the French ministers towards a people with whom they were still at peace, the maintenance of any terms of accommodation was obviously out of the question, the more especially when such sentiments met with a responsive voice from a numerous, active, and clamorous party on this side of the Channel. After some time spent in the correspondence, matters were brought to a crisis by the execution of Louis, which took place on 21st January 1793. As there was now no longer even the shadow of a government in the French capital, with whom to maintain a diplomatic intercourse, M. Chauvelin received notice to leave the British dominions within eight days—with a notification, however, that the English government would still listen to terms of accommodation: and on 3d February, the French Convention, on the report of Brissot, unanimously declared war against Great Britain.¹

Such is a detailed account of the causes that led to this great and universal war, which speedily embraced all the quarters of the globe, continued, with short interrup-

to abandon all measures or views of hostility against France, or interference in its internal affairs, and to maintain a correspondence and intercourse of amity with the existing powers in that country with whom such a treaty may be concluded. If, on the result of this proposal, so made by the powers acting in concert, these terms should not be accepted by France, or, being accepted, should not be satisfactorily performed, the different powers might then engage themselves to each other to enter into active measures for the purpose of obtaining the ends in view; and it may be considered whether in such case they might not reasonably look for some indemnity for the expenses and hazards to which they would necessarily be exposed." Such were the principles on which England was willing to have effected a general pacification in Europe; and it will appear in the sequel that these principles, and no others, were constantly maintained by her through the whole contest; and in particular, that the restoration of the Bourbons was never made or proposed as a condition of its termination.—See *Parl. Hist.* xxxiv. 1313, 1314.

¹ Ann. Reg.
xxxiv. 179,
199.

tions, for more than twenty years, led to the occupation of almost all the capitals in continental Europe by foreign armies, and finally brought the Cossacks and the Tartars to the French metropolis. We shall search in vain in any former age of the world for a contest conducted on so gigantic a scale, or with such general exasperation—in which such extraordinary exertions were made by governments, or such universal enthusiasm was manifested by their subjects. Almost all European history fades into insignificance, when compared to the wars which sprang out of the French Revolution ; the conquests of Marlborough or Turenne are lifeless when placed beside the campaigns of Napoleon.

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125.
Reflections
on this
event.

——— “Tot bella per orbem,

Tam multæ scelerum facies ; non ullus aratro
Dignus honos ; squalent abductis arva colonis,
Et curvæ rigidum falces conflantur in ensem.
Hinc movet Euphrates, illinc Germania bellum ;
Vicinæ ruptis inter se legibus urbes
Arma ferunt : sævit toto Mars impius orbe.”

Georgics, i. 505.

On coolly reviewing the events which led to the rupture, it cannot be said that any of the European powers were to blame in provoking it. The French government, even if they had possessed the inclination, had not the power to control their subjects, or prevent that communication with the discontented in other states which justly excited such alarm in their governments. The Austrian and Prussian monarchies had good cause to complain of the infringement of the Treaty of Westphalia, by the violent dispossessing of the nobles and clergy in Alsace, and justly apprehended the utmost danger to themselves, from the doctrines which were disseminated in their dominions by the French emissaries. Though last to abandon their system of neutrality, the English were ultimately drawn into the contest by the alarming principles of foreign interference, which the Jacobins avowed after the 10th August, and the imminent danger in which Holland was placed, by

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the victorious advance of the French armies to the banks of the Scheldt.

1793.

126.
Limits of
the princi-
ple of non-
interference.

The principle of non-interference with the domestic concerns of other states, perfectly just in the general case, is necessarily subject to some exceptions. No answer has ever been made to the observation of Mr Burke, “that if my neighbour’s house is in flames, and the fire is likely to spread to my own, I am justified in interfering to avert a disaster which promises to be equally fatal to both.” If foreign nations are warranted in interposing in extreme cases of tyranny by rulers to their subjects, they must be equally entitled to prevent excessive severity by a people towards their sovereign. The French, who so warmly and justly supported the treaty of 6th July 1827, intended to rescue Greece from Ottoman oppression—who took so active a part against Great Britain in the contest with her American colonies, and invaded the Netherlands and besieged Antwerp in 1832, professedly to preserve the peace of Europe,—have no right to complain of the Treaty of Pilnitz, which had for its object to rescue the French king from the scaffold, and the French nation from a tyranny which proved worse to themselves than that of Constantinople.

127.
Grounds of
the war as
stated in
British de-
claration.
Oct. 29.

The grounds on which the war was rested by the British government were afterwards fully developed in an important declaration, issued to the commanders of their forces by sea and land on 29th October 1793, shortly after the execution of the Queen. It was stated in that noble state paper,—“In place of the old government has succeeded a system destructive of all public order—maintained by proscriptions, exiles, and confiscations without number—by arbitrary imprisonments, by massacres, which cannot be remembered without horror, and at length by the execrable murder of a just and beneficent sovereign, and of the illustrious princess who, with unshaken firmness, has shared all the misfortunes of her royal consort—his protracted sufferings, his cruel captivity, and

ignominious death. The Allies have had to encounter acts of aggression without pretext, open violation of all treaties, unprovoked declarations of war ; in a word, whatever corruption, intrigue, or violence could effect, for the purpose, openly avowed, of subverting all the institutions of society, and extending over all the nations of Europe that confusion which has produced the misery of France. This state of things cannot exist in France without involving all the surrounding powers in one common danger ; without giving them the right—without imposing it upon them as a duty, to stop the progress of an evil which exists only by the successive violation of all law and property, and attacks the fundamental principles by which mankind is united in the bonds of civil society.

“The King will impose no other than equitable and moderate conditions ; not such as the expense, the risk, and sacrifices of the war might justify, but such as his majesty thinks himself under the indispensable necessity of requiring, with a view to these considerations, and still more to that of his own security, and of the future tranquillity of Europe. His majesty desires nothing more sincerely than thus to terminate a war which he in vain endeavoured to avoid, and all the calamities of which, as now experienced by France, are to be attributed only to the ambition, the perfidy, and the violence of those whose crimes have involved their own country in misery, and disgraced all civilised nations. The King promises on his part the suspension of hostilities, friendship, and, as far as the course of events will allow—of which the will of man cannot dispose—security and protection to all those who, by declaring for a monarchical form of government, shall shake off the yoke of sanguinary anarchy—of that anarchy which has broken all the most sacred bonds of society, dissolved all the relations of civil life, violated every right, confounded every duty ; which uses the name of liberty to exercise the most cruel tyranny, to annihilate all property, seize on all possessions ; which founds its

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Conditions
on which
peace was
still offered.

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power on the pretended consent of the people, and itself carries fire and sword through extensive provinces, for having defended their laws, their religion, and their lawful sovereign." This is real eloquence : this is the true statement of the grounds of the war, in language worthy of the great cause of freedom to which the nation was thenceforward committed, and which was never abandoned till the British armies passed in triumph through the gates of Paris.¹

¹ Ann. Reg.
1793. State
Papers, 199,
Parl. Hist.
xxx. 1597.

CHAPTER X.

CAMPAIGN OF 1792.

“PEACE,” says Ségur, “is the dream of the wise : war is the history of man. Youth listens without attention to those who seek to lead it by the paths of reason to happiness, and rushes with irresistible violence into the arms of the phantom which lures it by the light of glory to destruction.” Reason, wisdom, experience, strive in vain to subdue this propensity. For reasons superior to the conclusions of philosophy, for objects indispensable to the improvement of mankind, its lessons in this particular are unheeded by the generality of the species ; and whole generations, impelled by an irresistible impulse, fly to their own destruction, and seek, in contending with each other, a vent for the ungovernable passions of their nature. “To overawe or intimidate,” says Mr Ferguson, “and when we cannot persuade with reason, to resist with fortitude, are the occupations which give its most animating exercise and its greatest triumphs to a vigorous mind ; and he who has never struggled with his fellow-creatures is a stranger to half the sentiments of mankind.”¹

But we should greatly err if we imagined that this universal and inextinguishable passion is productive only of suffering, and that from the work of mutual destruction no benefit accrues to the future generations of men. It is by these tempests that the seeds of improvement are scattered over the world, that the races of mankind are mingled together, and the energy of northern character is

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1.
General
passion of
men for
war.¹ Ségur's
Memoirs,
ii. 59.
Ferguson,
39, Civil
Society.2.
Beneficial
effects of this
warlike
passion.

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blended with the refinement of southern civilisation. It is amidst the extremities and dangers of war that antiquated prejudice is abandoned, and new ideas are disseminated ; that invention springs from necessity, and improvement is stimulated by example ; that injustice is crushed by force, and liberty engendered amidst suffering. By the intermixture of the different races of men, the asperities of each are softened, the discoveries of each diffused, the productions of each appreciated, and the benefits of mutual communication extended. Rome conquered the world by her arms, and humanised it by her example ; the northern conquerors spread, amidst the corruption of ancient civilisation, the energy of barbarian valour ; the Crusades diffused through the western the knowledge and arts of the eastern world. The wars which sprang out of the French Revolution produced effects as great, and benefits as lasting upon the human species ; and amidst their bloody annals may be discerned at once the just retribution inflicted on both sides for enormous national crimes, and the rise of principles destined to change the frame of society, and purify the face of the moral world.

3.
State of the
French
armies at
the com-
mencement
of the war.

France, having decided upon war, directed the formation of three considerable armies. In the north, Marshal Rochambeau commanded forty thousand infantry and eight thousand cavalry, cantoned from Dunkirk to Phil lippeville. In the centre, Lafayette was stationed with forty-five thousand infantry and seven thousand cavalry, from Phillippeville to Lauter ; while Marshal Luckner, with thirty-five thousand infantry and eight thousand cavalry, observed the course of the Rhine from Bâle to Lauterburg. In the south, General Montesquiou, with fifty thousand men, was charged with the defence of the line of the Pyrenees and the course of the Rhone. But these armies were formidable only on paper. The agitation and license of the Revolution had loosened the bands of discipline, and the habit of judging and discussing political subjects destroyed the confidence of the soldiers in their comman-

ders. It might have been foreseen, too, that as soon as the war became defensive, one-half of this force would be required to garrison the triple line of fortresses which secured the course of the Rhine from foreign aggression. The national enthusiasm, however, speedily produced numerous recruits, though of the most strange and motley description, for the armies. The villages, the hamlets, sent forth their little bands of armed men to swell the forces on the frontier ; the towns were in a continued ferment from the zeal of the people ; the roads were covered with battalions of the national guard, hastening to the scene of action. But public spirit will not supply the absence of military organisation ; energy cannot in a campaign atone for the neglect of previous preparation ; nor courage make up the want of long-established discipline. All the early efforts of the French armies were unsuccessful ; and had the Allies been better prepared for the contest, or even duly improved the advantages they obtained, the war might have been terminated with ease in the first campaign.¹

To oppose these forces, the Continental powers had no sufficient forces ready—a sure proof that the military operations contemplated in the treaty of Pilnitz had been abandoned by the contracting powers. Austria and Prussia alone took the field ; England was still maintaining a strict neutrality ; and the forces of Russia, let loose from the Danube after the treaty of Jassy, were converging slowly towards Poland, the destined theatre of Muscovite ambition. Spain and Piedmont remained at peace. Fifty thousand Prussians were all that could be spared for so distant an operation as the invasion of France ; and the Emperor, weakened by his bloody contests with the Turks, could with difficulty muster sixty-five thousand men along the whole line of the Rhine, from the lake of Constance to the Dutch frontier. The emigrant corps, assembled in the countries of Treves and Coblenz, and in the margravate of Baden, hardly amounted to twelve thousand men,²—brave, high-spirited,

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¹ Toul. ii.
119, 121.
Jom. ii. 3.
4. Th. ii.
45, 46.

^{4.}
The Allied
forces.

² Ann. Reg.
1791, 206.
Jom. ii. 4.
5. Th. ii.
79.

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indeed, and enthusiastic in a cause in which their all was at stake, but ill-fitted, by their rank and habits, for the duties of private soldiers in a fatiguing campaign. Even they were not expected on the Rhine till the end of July.

5.
French invasion of the Low Countries, which is defeated.

29th April.

Encouraged by the inconsiderable amount of the Austrian forces in the Low Countries, an invasion of Flanders was attempted by the French. The troops were divided into four columns, destined to unite in the neighbourhood of Brussels, and on the 28th April they were put in motion. But in every direction they encountered discomfiture and disgrace. General Dillon, who advanced from Lille with four thousand men, was met by a detachment of the garrison of Tournay; and before the Austrians had made a single discharge, or even their cavalry arrived in the field, the French took to flight, murdered their commander, and re-entered Lille in such confusion as to endanger that important fortress. The corps which advanced from Valenciennes, under the orders of Biron, had no better success; hardly had the cannonade begun on the 29th with the Imperial troops, when two regiments of dragoons fled, exclaiming, "*Nous sommes trahis!*" and speedily drew after them the whole infantry. On the following day they were attacked by the Austrians under Beaulieu, and on the first onset fled to Valenciennes, exclaiming that they were betrayed, and were only rallied by Rochambeau with the utmost difficulty behind the Ruelle.

30th April.

¹John. ii. 16,
17. Th. ii.
78, 79, 80.
St Cyr. i.
47, 48. In-
troduction.
Toul. ii. 121.

The corps destined to advance from Dunkirk to Furnes, fell back upon hearing of these disasters, and General Lafayette judged it prudent to suspend the movement of his whole army, and to retire to his camp at Rancennes.¹

6.
Reflections on the wretched state of the French army at this period.

Such were the fruits of the insubordination and license which had prevailed in the French armies ever since they revolted against their sovereign—a memorable example to succeeding ages of the extreme peril of soldiers becoming politicians, and forgetting their military honour in the fancied discharge of social duties. The revolt of the French guards, the immediate cause of the overthrow of

Louis, brought France to the brink of destruction ; with a more enterprising or better prepared enemy, the demoralisation produced by the first defeat on the frontier would, on the admission of their own military historians, have proved fatal to the national independence.¹ Had Napoleon or Wellington commanded the Austrians in Flanders, the French never would have been permitted to rejoin their colours ; and, inefficient as their generals were at this period, if the Allies had been aware of the wretched state of their opponents, they might have advanced without difficulty to Paris. No reliance can be placed on troops, however effective once, who have engaged in a revolution, till their discipline has been restored by despotic authority. The extreme facility with which this invasion of Flanders was repelled, and the disgraceful rout of the French forces, produced an extraordinary effect in Europe. The Prussians conceived the utmost contempt for their new opponents, and it is curious to recur to the sentiments expressed by them at the commencement of the war. The military men at Magdeburg deemed the troops of France nothing but an undisciplined rabble : “ Do not buy too many horses,” said the minister Bischoffswerder to several officers of rank ; “ the comedy will not last long ; the army of lawyers will soon be annihilated in Belgium, and we shall be on our road home in autumn.”²

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¹ Jom. ii. 17.² Hard. i. 357. St. Cyr, i. 50. Introd.

The Jacobins and war party in Paris, though extremely disconcerted by the disgrace of their arms, had the address to conceal their apprehensions. They launched forth the thunders of their indignation against the authors of their disasters. Luckner was appointed to succeed Rochambeau, who was dismissed, and tribunals were created for the trial of offences against military discipline. The most energetic measures were taken to reinforce the armies, and revive the national spirit, which the recent disasters had much depressed ; and the new general received orders to resume offensive operations. Feeble and irresolute, this

7.
Consternation in consequence at Paris, and movements of the Allies.

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old commander was ill qualified to restore the confidence of the army. His first operations were as unsuccessful as those of his predecessor, and he was obliged, after receiving a severe check, to retire in haste to his own frontier. At the same time the advanced guard of Lafayette was surprised and defeated near Maubeuge, and his numerous army thrown into a state of complete discouragement. At that period, it seemed as if the operations of the French generals were dependent upon the absence of their enemies ; the moment they appeared they were precipitately abandoned. Meanwhile, the Austrian and Prussian forces were slowly collecting on the frontier. The disgraceful tumult on the 20th June accelerated their movements, and M. Calonne incessantly urged the Allied sovereigns to advance with rapidity, as the only means of extricating Louis from his perilous situation. The Prussians assembled in the neighbourhood of Coblenz in the middle of June. The disciplined skill of the troops, trained in the school of Potsdam, and the martial air of the Austrians, recently returned from the Turkish campaigns, seemed to promise an easy victory over the tumultuary levies of France. The disorganisation and discouragement of the French armies had arrived at the highest pitch before the invasion commenced, and Frederick William reckoned at least as much on the feebleness of their defence as on the magnitude of his own forces.¹

¹ Toul. ii. 123, 211.
Jom. ii. 19, 28, 85. St
Cyr, i. 62.
Introd.
Th. ii. 80.

8.

Character of
the Duke of
Brunswick.

The Duke of Brunswick, who was intrusted with the command of the army, and first took the lead among the generals who combated the French Revolution, was a man of no ordinary capacity. He was born in 1735, the son of Charles Duke of Brunswick, and his wife the sister of Frederick II. of Prussia. Early in life he evinced an extraordinary aptitude for the acquisition of knowledge ; unhappily, the habits of the dissolute court where he was brought up initiated him as rapidly into the pleasures and vices of corrupted life. During the Seven Years' War he was called to more animating duties, and became

the companion in arms and friend of the Great Frederick ; but the return of peace restored him to inactivity, mistresses, and pleasure. These voluptuous habits, which his marriage, in 1764, to the Princess Augusta, sister of George III. King of England, did not diminish, had no tendency, however, to extinguish the native vigour of his mind. He was endowed with an ardent imagination, and possessed a graceful figure and animated countenance. But he had no steadiness or resolution. His conversation was brilliant, his knowledge immense, his ideas clear, and delivered with the utmost perspicuity ; but although the vivacity of his imagination made him rapidly perceive the truth, and anticipate all the objections which could be urged against his opinions, it had the effect of rendering him irresolute in conduct, and perpetually the prey of apprehensions lest his reputation should be endangered—a peculiarity frequently observable in first-rate men of the second order, but never seen in the master-spirits of mankind.¹

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1792.

¹ Mirabeau,
Cour de
Berlin, i.
231. Hard.
i. 347, 351.
Cap. Eur.
pend. la Rév.
Franç. i. 248.

Jealous of his military reputation, and of the character which he had acquired of being, after the death of Frederick the Great, the ablest prince in Germany, he was unwilling to hazard both by engaging in the contest with revolutionary France, the perils of which he distinctly perceived. Nor were personal motives wanting to confirm him in this opinion. Previous to the commencement of hostilities, the Abbé Sièyes, and the party of philosophers in that country, had cast their eyes on this prince as the chief most capable of directing the Revolution, and at the same time disarming the hostility of Prussia, and they had even entered into secret negotiations with him on that subject. It may easily be imagined with what reluctance the Duke entered upon a course of hostilities which at once interrupted such an understanding, and possibly deprived him of the brilliant hope that he might one day be called to the throne of the Bourbons.² Impressed with these ideas, he addressed a secret memoir to

9.
His secret
views in en-
tering on
this war.

² Cap. Eur.
pend. la Rév.
i. 117, 120.
Hard. i.
349, 353.

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the King of Prussia, full of just and equitable views on the course to be pursued in the approaching invasion, which it would have been well for the Allies if they had strictly adhered to during the campaign. *

10.
Selfish
views of
the Allied
powers at
this period.

In the ambitious projects entertained at this period by the Prussian cabinet and the Duke of Brunswick, is to be found the true secret of the disasters of the campaign, and one powerful cause of the subsequent calamities which befell every part of Europe. The former was intent on iniquitous gains in Poland, and took the lead in the coalition against France chiefly in order to gratify the wishes of the Empress Catherine, who was the head of the league for effecting the partition of the former country, and at the same time vehemently desirous of extinguishing the principles of the Revolution. The latter was apprehensive lest his great reputation, which rested on no permanent or illustrious actions, should be endangered, and his secret views in France blasted by too intemperate an hostility against that country. Thus both the government and the generalissimo were prepared to play false before they entered upon the campaign. They intended only to make a show of hostility on the Rhine, sufficient to propitiate the Semiramis of the north, and incline her to allow them as large a share as possible of the contemplated booty on the Vistula. Frederick William, indeed, was sincere in his desire to deliver the King of France, and re-establish monarchical authority in his dominions ; but, surrounded by ministers who had

* "You will understand better than I what an important effect the disposition of the interior of France must have on the operations of the campaign. It would be well to address a proclamation to the national guards, announcing that we do not make war on the nation, that we have no intention of abridging their liberties, that we do not desire to overturn their constitution ; but that we insist only for reparation to the German princes dispossessed in Alsace. That affair of the indemnities will occasion the greatest embarrassment, if we cannot prevail on the Emperor to give his consent to the changes which are commencing in Poland. For my own part, I give to acquisitions in Poland a decided preference to any that may be acquired in France ; for by any attempt at territorial aggrandisement in that country, the whole spirit in which the war should be conducted will be changed."
Mém. 19th Feb. 1792.—HARD. i. 353.

different objects in view, he was unable to act with the energy requisite to insure success, nor was he aware of the difficulties to be encountered in its prosecution. The Duke of Brunswick alone was adequately impressed with the serious dangers which attended the proposed invasion, and in his memoir, already mentioned, he had strongly urged the necessity of "immediate and decisive operations, the more so as, without them, consequences of incalculable importance may ensue ; for the French are in such a state of effervescence that, if not defeated in the outset, they may become capable of the most extraordinary resolution." ¹

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¹ Hard. i.
353, 357.

Dumourier, minister of foreign affairs at Paris, aware that Austria was totally unprepared for a war in the Low Countries, and strongly impressed with the idea that the real object of France should be to wrest these opulent provinces from the house of Hapsburg, counselled an immediate advance into Flanders ; while at the same time, by means of secret agents, he prepared the minds of the discontented, both in that country and in Piedmont, to second the invasion of the Republicans. Aware of the intrigues which M. Sémonville, the French envoy, was carrying forward, the King of Sardinia refused to permit him to advance beyond Alessandria. Dumourier affected the utmost indignation at this slight put upon "the great nation" in the person of its plenipotentiary ; but the cabinet of Turin remained firm, and refused either to admit M. Sémonville to the court, or make any submission to the indignant feelings of the Republicans.²

11.
Views of
Dumourier
and the gov-
ernment
of Paris.

² Hard. i.
357, 369.

After much deliberation, the Allies resolved to attempt the invasion of France by the plains of Champagne, the same quarter where an inroad was afterwards successfully achieved by them in 1814. Great difficulties were experienced in regard to the corps of emigrants, which, from the want of aid either from Prussia or Austria, had not yet attained any consistent military organisation ; as, on the one hand, the Allies were apprehensive of exciting

12.
The in-
vasion of
Champagne
is resolved
on.

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May 3.

¹ Hard, i.
367, 369.13.
Impolitic
invasion of
Poland, and
wise views
of Louis
XVI.

the nation by the sight of an armed invasion of the emigrant noblesse, while, on the other, the influence of those illustrious exiles, especially with the northern courts, rendered it an imprudent measure to give them any serious ground of complaint. At length a middle course was resolved on—to join the emigrant corps to the army, but keep it in reserve with the second line—a resolution which, however unhappy, was rendered unavoidable by the arrival of a courier from St Petersburg, bringing despatches, containing not only the entire concurrence of the Empress Catherine in the proposed hostile operations, but her resolution not to permit any change in the form of government in any European state. This declaration, under the veil of a general principle not likely to be disputed in despotic courts, concealed her secret design to make the recent changes in the Polish constitution a pretext for completing the partition of the Sarmatian plains.¹

The partitioning powers at length spoke openly out. On the 8th June, Frederick William, in concert with the Empress Catherine, replied to the King of Poland, that he entirely disapproved of the revolution so lately effected in the Polish dominions, and that nothing but an immediate invasion by the Russian and Prussian forces could be anticipated from such a step, taken without their concurrence. At the same time twenty-five thousand men, under Marshal Moellendorf, received orders to advance towards Warsaw. Thus, at the time when a cordial alliance of all the European powers was imperatively called for to stem the torrent of the French Revolution, the seeds of weakness and disunion were already sown, from the unjustifiable projects of some of them of aggrandisement on the shores of the Vistula. Meanwhile the King of France, not venturing openly to communicate with the Allied sovereigns, despatched a secret envoy to Vienna with letters to Marshal Castries, whom he had selected to communicate between him and the exiled princes, containing the wisest and most salutary advice

on the conduct to be pursued by the invading powers.* CHAP. X.
 These instructions were received, and deliberately considered by the Allied cabinets. They were strongly 1792.
 impressed at the time with the justice of his views, and July 20.
 gave the most solemn assurances to the envoy, Mallet du ¹ Hard. i.
 Pan, that their measures should be entirely regulated by 369, 383,
 them. But the advice was forgotten almost as soon as it 402, 421.
 was received, and the more intemperate wishes of the Bert. de
 exiled princes subsequently gained too great an ascen- Moll. Mém.
 dancy in the counsels of the coalition.¹ 370, 374.
 Mallet du
 Pan, i. 286,
 287.

On the 25th July the King of Prussia joined the army, and on the same day the proclamation was issued which had so powerful an effect in exciting the patriotism and healing the divisions of the French people.† This 14.
 Proclama-
 tion of the
 Duke of
 Brunswick.

* "The safety of the monarchy," said Louis, "that of the King and all his family, the general security of persons and property, the stability of the order which may eventually succeed to the present confusion, the urgent necessity of abridging the duration of the crisis, and weakening the agitating influences—all concur in recommending the views of his majesty to all true Royalists. He fears, with reason, that a foreign invasion will induce a civil war in the interior, or rather a frightful *Jacquerie*; that is the object of his greatest apprehension. He ardently desires, in order to prevent the calamities of which you appear to discard too lightly the consideration, that the emigrants should take no part in the approaching hostilities; that they should consult the interests of the King, of the state, of their properties, and of all the Royalists in the interior, rather than their own just resentment; and that, after having disarmed crime by their victories, and dissolved a fanatical league by depriving it of its means of resistance, they may, by a salutary revolution, prepare the way for a treaty of peace, in which the King and the foreign powers may be the arbiters of the destinies and laws of the nation."—*Instructions of Louis XVI. to Duc de Castries*.—HARD. i. 402, 404.

† "After having suppressed, in an arbitrary manner, the rights and possessions of the German princes in Alsace and Lorraine; troubled and overthrown, in the interior, good order and legitimate government; committed on the sacred person of the King and his august family crimes and acts of violence, which are renewed day after day, those who have usurped the reins of power in France have at length put the finishing stroke to their misdeeds by declaring war on his Majesty the Emperor, and attacking his possessions in the Low Countries. Some of the possessions of the German empire have been involved in that aggression; others have only escaped the danger by yielding to the imperious demands of the ruling party in France. His Majesty the King of Prussia, united in a close alliance with the Austrian monarch, and, like him, charged with the defence of the German confederacy, has deemed it indispensable to march to the succour of his Imperial Majesty and of Germany. To these motives is joined, also, the equally important object of terminating the anarchy in the interior of France itself, arresting the strokes levelled at the throne and the altar, re-establishing legal power, and restoring to the King

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proclamation, though signed by the Duke of Brunswick, was drawn up by M. Calonne and the Marquis Lemon, in more violent terms than was originally intended, or than was consistent with the objects of the war, as set forth in the previous official declaration of the Prussian cabinet, in consequence of the intelligence which the Allied powers had received of the secret offers made to the Duke by the constitutional party in France, and the necessity which they thence conceived there was of com-

the security and liberty of which he has been deprived, and putting him in a condition to exercise his legitimate authority. Convinced that the sound and right thinking part of the French nation abhor the excesses of the faction which has subjugated it, and that the great majority of the inhabitants await only the arrival of external succour to declare themselves openly against the tyranny which oppresses them, their Imperial and Royal Majesties invite them to return to the ways of reason, justice, order, and peace; and declare—

“ I. That, being drawn into this war by irresistible circumstances, the two Allied courts propose to themselves no other object but the happiness of France, without seeking to enrich themselves by conquests at its expense.

“ II. That they have as little intention of interfering in the internal government of France; but that their only object is to deliver the King, the Queen, and the royal family, from their captivity, and to procure to his most Christian Majesty the security to enable him, without danger, and without obstacle, to convoke the assemblies which he may deem necessary to secure the happiness of his subjects, in conformity with his promises, so far as depends on him.

“ III. That the combined armies will protect the towns, burghs, and villages; the persons and property of all those who shall submit themselves to the King; and that they will concur in the immediate establishment of order and police over all France.

“ IV. That the national guards are called upon, in an especial manner, to watch over the tranquillity of the towns and country, and the preservation of the lives and property of all the French until the arrival of the troops of their Imperial and Royal Majesties, or till otherwise ordered, under pain of being personally responsible; while, on the other hand, such of the national guards as shall have combated against the forces of the Allied courts, and shall be taken with arms in their hands, shall be treated as enemies, and punished as rebels to their King, and disturbers of the public tranquillity.

“ V. That the generals, officers, and soldiers of the French army are, in like manner, summoned to return to their ancient fidelity, and to submit instantly to the King, their lawful sovereign.

“ VI. That the members of departments, districts, and municipalities shall be in like manner responsible, with their heads and properties, for all the crimes, conflagrations, pillages, and assassinations, which they have not done their utmost to prevent in their respective jurisdictions; and they are hereby required to continue in their functions till his most Christian Majesty is set at liberty.

“ VII. The inhabitants of towns, burghs, and villages who shall dare to defend themselves against the troops of their Imperial and Royal Majesties, and fire on them, either in the open country, or from windows, doors, or roofs,

mitting him irrevocably against the Revolution.* The objectionable passages were introduced against his will by the direct authority of the Emperor and the King of Prussia; and so strongly impressed was the Duke of Brunswick with the unhappy consequences likely to arise from the publication of such a manifesto, that he tore to pieces the first copy brought to him for his signature, and ever after called it "that deplorable manifesto." Certain it is, that if issued at all, it should only have been at the gates of Paris and after a decisive success in the field; and that to publish it at the outset merely of feeble and

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¹ Hard. i.
427, 432.
Cap. Eur.
pend. la Rév.
Franç. i.
316.

shall be punished on the spot, according to the laws of war, and their houses burned or demolished. Those, on the other hand, who shall immediately submit shall be taken under their Majesties' especial protection.

"VIII. The town of Paris and all its inhabitants, without distinction, are hereby warned to submit without delay to the King; to put that prince at entire liberty, and to show to them, as well as all the royal family, the inviolability and respect which the law of nature and of nations binds on subjects towards their sovereigns. Their Imperial and Royal Majesties will render all the members of the National Assembly, of the departments, of the district, of the municipality, and of the national guard of Paris, responsible for all events, with their heads, under military tribunals. They further declare on their faith and word as Emperor and King, that if the chateau of the Tuileries is forced or insulted, or the least violence or outrage committed on the King, Queen, or royal family, and if provision is not immediately made for their safety, preservation, and liberty, they will inflict a signal, rare, and memorable vengeance, by delivering up the city of Paris to military execution and total overthrow, and the rebels guilty of such attempts to the punishment they have merited. On the other hand, if they promptly submit, their Imperial and Royal Majesties engage to use their good offices with his most Christian Majesty to procure the pardon of their crimes and errors."—*Proclamation of the Duke of Brunswick, Coblenz, 25th July 1792. Moniteur, August 1, 1792. JOMINI, Histoire des Guerres de la Révolution, ii. 355. Pièces Justificatives, No. 5.*

* "There is no power," said the Prussian manifesto, "interested in the balance of power in Europe, which can behold with unconcern that great kingdom become a prey to anarchical horrors, which have in a manner annihilated its political existence,† there is no true Frenchman who must not desire to see such disorders terminated. To put a period to the anarchy in France, to establish with that view legal power on the base of monarchical authority, to secure by this means the other powers from the incendiary efforts of a frantic Jacobin band,—such are the objects which the King, in conjunction with his ally, proposes to himself in this noble enterprise, not only with the general concurrence of the powers of Europe, who recognise its justice and necessity, but with the approbation and well wishes of every friend to the human race."—HARD. i. 425, 426.

† Mr Burke was of the same opinion. "We may regard France," said he, "as now nearly blotted out from the political map of Europe."—Speech in the House of Commons, 9th Feb. 1790. —*Works, v. 5, 6*

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languid military operations, was the height of imprudence, which, if not followed by victory, could lead to nothing but disaster.

15.
Invasion of
France, and
disposition
of the
French
forces.
July 30.

On the 30th, the whole army broke up and entered the French territory. The Allied forces consisted of fifty thousand Prussians, in the finest condition, and supported by an unusually large train both of heavy and field artillery; forty-five thousand Austrians, the greater part of whom were veterans from the Turkish wars; six thousand Hessians, and upwards of twelve thousand French emigrants, dispersed by a most injudicious arrangement into separate corps—in all, a hundred and thirteen thousand men: a formidable army, both from its numerical force and its warlike qualities, and fully adequate, if ably and energetically led, to breaking down any force which the French government at that period could array against it. The French armies destined to oppose this invasion were by no means equal, either in discipline or equipment, to their antagonists; and they were soon paralysed by intestine divisions. The army of Lafayette, now not more than twenty-eight thousand strong, was posted in the neighbourhood of Sédan; Beurnonville between Maubeuge and Lille, with thirty thousand; Kellermann, with twenty thousand, at Metz; Custine at Landau, with fifteen thousand; and Biron in Alsace, with thirty thousand—in all, a hundred and twenty-three thousand men, but extremely defective both in discipline and equipment. Above twelve thousand of the officers who formerly commanded the national armies had joined the ranks of the emigrants, and those selected to supply their place had as yet no experience in the military art. But the revolution of the 10th August changed the command of the armies, and ultimately proved fatal to the Allies, not less from the energy which it imparted to the government than the ability which it brought to the head of military affairs.¹ Lafayette, having in vain endeavoured to raise the standard of revolt against the Jacobins, was compelled to

¹ Compare Jom. ii. 1; and Toul. ii. 266. Ann. Reg. xxxv. 45. Jom. ii. 36, 37; and Bert. de Moll. i. 174, 179. Th. iii. 37, 39. St Cyr, i. 39.

fly for safety to the Austrian lines ; and Luckner having disobeyed the Convention, the command of both their armies was intrusted to Dumourier—a man whose ardent spirit, indefatigable activity, and boundless resources, were peculiarly fitted to rescue France from the perilous situation in which it was placed.

A triple barrier of strong fortresses defends France from invasion on its eastern frontier. The centre of this line, where an attack was threatened from the Allied forces, is covered by Thionville, Bitsch, Sarre Louis, Longwy, and Montmedy, in front, and Metz, Verdun, Sédan, and Mézières, in the rear ; while the woody heights of the Argonne forest, occupying a space of fifteen leagues between Verdun and Sédan, offer the most serious obstacles to the passage of an army. It was by this line that the Allies resolved to invade the country—which was the most judicious that, considering the amount of their troops, they could have adopted ; for experience has since proved, that a force of not less than two hundred and fifty thousand men would be requisite to make a successful irruption from the side of Switzerland or Flanders. Everything seemed to announce success, and tended to recommend the most vigorous measures in seizing it. The French armies, scattered over an immense line, from the Alps to the ocean, were incapable of uniting for any common operation ; and their state of disorganisation was such as to render it extremely doubtful whether they were either disposed or qualified to combine for effecting it. Three fortresses only lay on their road—Sédan, Longwy, and Verdun—all in a wretched state of defence ; after which the army had nothing but the Argonne forest and a fertile plain to traverse on the road to Paris. In these circumstances, a powerful and rapid attack on the centre seemed the most prudent, as well as the most effectual means of dispersing the forces of the Revolution, and reaching the heart of its power, before any effective array could be collected for its defence.¹ There can be no ques-

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16.
Line of
advance
adopted by
the Allies.

¹ *Jom. i. 90, 91 ; and ii. 86. Th. iii. 40. Toul. ii. 295.*

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X.

1792.

17.
Tardy ad-
vance of
the Allies.
Longwy and
Verdun
surrender.
Aug. 20.

tion of the wisdom of the plan of operations ; but the Allies were grievously mistaken in the degree of vigour required for carrying it into execution.

The invading army advanced with slowness, and apparent timidity, in a country which they professed to consider as the scene of certain conquest. At length, after an inexplicable delay of above a fortnight, the fortress of Longwy was invested on the 20th August ; and a bombardment having been immediately commenced, the garrison, which was partly composed of volunteers, and divided in opinion, capitulated on the 23d. At the same time, intelligence was received of the flight of Lafayette from the army which he commanded, and that he had sought refuge from the violence of his soldiers within the Austrian lines. Everything seemed to announce success ; and if the Duke of Brunswick, taking advantage of the consternation of the moment, had fallen with the bulk of his forces upon the army around Sédan, now destitute of a commander, there can be no doubt that a blow might have been struck which would have spread such consternation among the revolutionary party as would have led to the rapid termination of the war. Instead of doing so, however, the Allied army, following the preconceived plan of operations, advanced on the great road, and, after another unaccountable delay of six days around Longwy, moved forward on the 29th, and on the 30th invested Verdun. On the 2d September this important fortress capitulated, after a feeble resistance : and there now remained no fortified place in a state of defence on the road to Paris.¹ *

Sept. 2.
¹Th. iii. 42.
98. Jom. i.
101, 102.

After such extraordinary and unhoped-for good fortune

* In the course of the march the King of Prussia met a young soldier with his knapsack on his back and an old musket in his hands. "Where are you going?" said the King. "To fight," replied the soldier. "By that answer," replied the monarch, "I recognise the noblesse of France." He saluted him, and passed on. The soldier's name has since become immortal; it was FRANÇOIS CHATEAUBRIAND, then returning from his travels in North America to share in the dangers of the throne in his native country.—See CHATEAUBRIAND, *Mémoires*, 83, *Fragments*.

as the capitulation of the only fortresses which lay on their road, after an investment of a few days each, it is difficult to account either for the subsequent inactivity or ultimate disasters of the Allied army. The force around Sédan, now under the command of Dumourier, did not exceed twenty-five thousand men, little more than a fourth part of the Duke of Brunswick's troops; and the other armies were so far distant, that on it almost exclusively depended the salvation of France. But the dilatory conduct of the Allies, joined to the enterprise and genius of Dumourier, neutralised all these advantages. Nothing could rouse the Duke of Brunswick from his extraordinary circumspection—not even the urgent representations of the King of Prussia, who longed for decisive operations.* Everything depended upon the immediate occupation of the defiles of the Argonne forest, the last remaining barrier between a victorious army of ninety thousand men and the capital. These wooded heights were only six leagues in advance of the Allies, and it was of the utmost importance to reach them before the enemy; for, if once the war was carried into the plains beyond, there was little chance that the ill-disciplined troops of France would be able to withstand the numerous and magnificent cavalry of the Prussians.

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18.
The Allies
fail to
occupy the
Argonne
forest.

* The advantages which lay open to the invading army at this juncture, are thus set forth by the person of all others best qualified to appreciate them—General Dumourier. “How did it happen,” says he, “that, after the fall of Longwy, on the 23d August, the enemy did not instantly resolve to march on Stenay and Monzow, and there annihilate the French army, or draw over the troops of the line to their side, in the perplexity in which they were after the dethronement of the King? Nothing is more certain than that, if they had done so, the French army would have disbanded; nay, there is reason to believe, that if some of the popular officers of the old regime had presented themselves at the advanced posts, a great part of the troops of the line, especially the cavalry, would have joined the Allied army.

“When you are about to invade a country torn by a revolution, when you know that you may rely on a large party in its bosom, when you would deliver a king in fetters, it should be a fixed principle, especially with a large army, to multiply your forces by rapidity of movement, and arrive like a clap of thunder at the capital, without giving the people time to recover from their consternation. After Longwy was taken, if the army of Sédan had been dispersed, no obstacle remained, either to the prosecution of a methodical campaign or an immediate march to Paris.”—DUMOURIER, iii. 32.

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The eagle eye of Dumourier speedily pitched on the sole defensible point, and, placing his hand on the Argonne forest in the map,—“There,” said he, “is the Thermopylæ of France : if I have the good fortune to arrive there before the Prussians, all is saved.” His determination was instantly taken ; but it appears that the movement upon that decisive line had been previously recommended by the Executive Council of Paris. He had only delayed executing it from an opinion, that the Allies would be detained several weeks before Longwy and Verdun, and that the best way of arresting their march was to threaten an invasion of the Low Countries.¹

¹ Dum. ii.
387, 391.
Th. iii. 43,
88, 89.
Toul. ii.
297, 299.

19.
Description
of the Ar-
gonne forest,
which Du-
mourier
seizes.

The forest of Argonne is a wooded ridge, extending from the neighbourhood of Sedan, in a south-westerly direction, about thirteen leagues. Its breadth varies from one to four leagues. Five roads traverse it, leading into the rich and fertile districts of Evêchés from the open and sandy plains of Champagne. The great road to Paris goes by the pass of Islettes : the other passes were named Grandpré, Chêne-Populeux, Croix-au-Bois, and Chalade. These roads required to be occupied and guarded before they were reached by the enemy—a perilous operation, as it involved a flank movement directly in front of a vastly superior hostile army. The ruinous effect of the delay round Longwy, after the fall of that fortress, was now apparent. Had the Allied forces moved on, instead of waiting there a week in inactivity, the war would have been carried into the plains of Champagne, and the broken ground passed before the French army could possibly have arrived. Clairfait, with the advanced guard of the Allies, was, on the 30th August, only six leagues from Islettes, the principal passage through the forest of Argonne ; while the most advanced posts of the French, commanded by Dillon, were distant ten leagues ; and the nearest road to reach it lay directly in front of the Austrian advanced posts. Determined, however, at all hazards, to gain the passes, Dumourier, on the 31st, took the bold resolution

Aug. 31.

of pushing on directly across the Austrian vanguard. This resolution was entirely successful ; the Allies, ignorant of his designs, and intent only on covering the siege of Verdun, which was going forward, withdrew their advanced posts, and allowed the French to pass ; and from the 1st to the 4th September, the whole army defiled within sight almost of their videttes, and occupied the passes, Dumourier himself taking his station at Grandpré, near the centre, with thirteen thousand men. He immediately fortified the position, and awaited in tranquillity the reinforcements which he expected from the interior, the army of the centre, and that of the north.¹

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¹ Personal observation.
Jom. ii. 109.
Toul. ii. 300.
Th. iii. 90.

These expected reinforcements were very considerable, for Beurnonville and Duval were hastening from the army of Flanders with sixteen thousand men ; while Kellermann, with twenty-two thousand, was expected in a few days from the neighbourhood of Metz. Large bodies were also advancing from Paris, where the republican government was taking the most energetic measures for the public defence. Camps for the recruits were formed at Soissons, Meaux, Rheims, and Châlons, where numerous volunteers were daily arriving, animated with the greatest enthusiasm ; while the sanguinary despots of Paris marched off thousands of citizens, reeking with the blood of the massacres in the prisons, to more honourable combats on the frontier. The whole reinforcements from the interior were ordered to assemble at Ste-Ménéhould, a little in the rear of the position of the army. The camp of the French general himself at Grandpré was one of uncommon strength. A succession of heights, placed in the form of an amphitheatre, formed the ground on which the army was placed : at their feet vast meadows stretched forth, in the midst of which the Aisne flowed in a deep stream, forming a valuable cover to the front of the camp. Two bridges only were thrown over the river, each of which was guarded by a strong advanced body. The enemy would thus be under the necessity of crossing the Aisne without the aid

20.
Dumourier's
position
there.

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¹ Personal
observation.
Dum. ii. 394,
396; iii. 2.
Toul. ii. 301.
Jom. ii. 110,
111. Th.
ii. 93, 94.
St Cyr, i.
66. Introd.

of bridges, traversing a wide extent of meadow, under the concentric fire of numerous batteries, and finally scaling a rugged ridge broken by wood, strengthened by intrenchments, and almost inaccessible. Confident in the strength of this position, Dumourier wrote to the minister of war in these terms :—"Verdun is taken : I am in hourly expectation of the Prussians : the camps at Grandpré and Islettes are the Thermopylæ of France ; but I shall be more successful than Leonidas."¹

21.
Dilatory
motions of
the Allies.

While these energetic measures were going forward on the French side, the steps of the Allies, notwithstanding their extraordinary good fortune, were marked by that indecision which, in a war of invasion, and above all in the invasion of a revolutionary power, is the sure forerunner of defeat. It was evident from the position of the French army, and the numerous reinforcements hastening to them from every quarter, that everything depended upon forcing the passes, and throwing them into confusion before their troops were augmented, or the moral energy acquired which, in war, is even more important than numerical strength. Instead of this, the Allied movements were unaccountably tardy, as if they wished to give the French time to collect their forces, and complete their means of defence, before any decisive operations were commenced. Though Verdun capitulated on the 2d September, the army did not advance till the 5th, when it remained in position on the heights of Fromerville till the 11th, wasting in inactivity the most precious days of the campaign. At length, being informed of the occupation of the passes by Dumourier, and having completed his preparations, the Duke of Brunswick, on the 12th, moved a part of his forces to Landres, and remained there in perfect inactivity till the 17th, threatening the left of the French position.²

² Jom. ii.
115, 118.
St Cyr, i.
67. Introd.

Misinformed as to this movement, Dumourier withdrew a considerable part of the forces which occupied the pass of Croix-au-Bois, one of the five which traversed the

forest of Argonne, and was situated on the left of the line, to support the centre at Grandpré, where an attack was anticipated. The consequence was, that on the 12th Clairfait established himself in that important post, and thus broke the French line, and threatened to take it in rear. Sensible of his error, the French general detached General Chazot to retake the position ; but the Austrian general not only maintained his ground, but defeated and threw back his opponents from the central corps of the army, so as entirely to turn the left of the French position. The situation of Dumourier was now highly critical. His force in the central camp at Grandpré did not exceed sixteen thousand men, while the whole Prussian army was in his front, and the Austrians under Clairfait were rapidly defiling into his rear. To complete his misfortunes, Kellermann, whose march from Metz had been unaccountably slow, had not yet arrived ; and it was evident that he could not effect a junction but in the rear of the position in the Argonne forest ; while the detachment intrusted with the defence of the pass of Chêne-Populeux, unable to resist the attacks of the Austrians, abandoned its position, and fell back towards Châlons. “Never,” says Dumourier, “was the situation of an army more desperate : France was within a hairbreadth of destruction.”¹

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22.
Clairfait
seizes the
pass of
Croix-au-
Bois.

Sept. 15.

¹ Dum. iii.
20, 21, 23.
St Cyr, i.
67, 69.
Jom. ii. 120,
121. Th.
iii. 101, 102.

In this extremity the French general resolved to evacuate entirely the line of the Argonne forest, and to fall back with all his forces to the position of Ste-Ménéhould, a few leagues in his rear. Everything depended upon gaining time. The heavy rains were already commencing, which promised ere long to render a further advance of the Allies extremely difficult, if not impracticable. The camp, in consequence, was raised at midnight on the 15th ; and on the 17th the whole army was collected in the rear, at Ste-Ménéhould, where he resolved to remain firm till the expected reinforcements arrived. His forces did not exceed twenty-five thousand men, but their position was

23.
Retreat of
Dumourier
to Ste-
Ménéhould,
and rout of
part of the
French
army.

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1792.

Sept. 17.

defended by a numerous and excellent artillery ; while the reinforcements, which were daily expected, promised to raise their numerical amount to seventy thousand combatants. During the retreat, however, an incident occurred which had wellnigh brought destruction on the whole army. General Chazot, who commanded the rearguard of ten thousand men, was attacked at Vaux by fifteen hundred Prussian hussars, and four pieces of horse-artillery. The French troops instantly took to flight, disbanded themselves, rushed through the main body in the utmost confusion, and numbers fled as far as Rheims and Paris in the most dreadful alarm. But for the exertions of General Duval, who succeeded in reorganising part of the rearguard, and of General Miranda, who restored order in the main body, the whole column would have been irretrievably routed. The Prussian cavalry, however, not being supported, were at length obliged to retire, astonished at their easy success, and lamenting that so favourable an opportunity had been lost of destroying their whole opponents. If two thousand more Allied horse had followed up this success, the whole French army would have been irretrievably routed. As it was, many of their troops fled thirty leagues and upwards from the field of battle, spreading consternation wherever they went, and declaring that all was lost. At six in the evening, after the troops had taken up their ground near Dammartin, a new panic seized the troops : the artillerymen, in haste, harnessed their horses to escape beyond the little river Bionne, and all the camp was in confusion. At length some degree of order was restored, by the dragoons in the general's escort striking the fugitives with the flats of their sabres ; great fires were lighted, and the army rested in groups around them without any distinction or order.¹

¹ St Cyr, i. 69, 71. Introd. Th. iii. 104, 105. Dum. iii. 30, 31, 38. Jom. ii. 123.

“ I have been obliged,” said Dumourier, in his letter to the Convention, “ to return from the camp of Grandpré. During the retreat an unaccountable panic seized the army ; ten thousand men fled from fifteen hundred Prussian hussars ; the loss did not amount to fifty men ; everything is

repaired, and I answer for the safety of France." But he was far from feeling, in reality, the confidence which these words seemed to indicate. The rout of so large a portion of his forces by so small a body of the enemy, demonstrated how little reliance was to be placed on the undisciplined levies, of which they were in great part composed, when performing movements in presence of a numerous and warlike enemy. He resolved, in consequence, to make the war one of positions, and to inspire his troops with fresh confidence by placing them behind impregnable intrenchments. The situation of the new camp which he selected was well calculated to effect these objects. Standing on a rising-ground in the centre of a large and open valley, it commanded all the country around; the centre of the army, under his own immediate orders, faced towards Champagne, while the corps of Dillon was stationed on the road leading from Verdun, and still held the passes of Islettes and Chalade, through which the principal road to Paris was conducted. A numerous artillery defended all the avenues to the camp, and water was to be had in abundance from the river Aisne, which bounded its right side, and the Aube, which protected its left. In this position the French general anxiously awaited the arrival of the expected reinforcements. Terrified at the reports which they received of the rout at Vaux, Kellermann and Beurnonville retired, when almost close to the camp of Ste-Ménéhould, the former to Vitry, the latter to Châlons. They would have been irretrievably separated, if the Allies had shown the least vigour in improving their advantages. But their extraordinary delays gave Dumourier time to reiterate his orders for an immediate junction. Kellermann and Beurnonville made a long circuit by the rear; and at length, on the 19th, the whole three armies were united in the neighbourhood of Ste-Ménéhould. The orders to Beurnonville were carried by an aide-de-camp of Dumourier, named MACDONALD,¹ *

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1792.

24.

Dumourier
takes post at
Ste-Méné-
hould, and
the French
armies
unite.
Sept. 18.

Sept. 19.

¹ Dum. iii.
34, 37. Jom.
ii. 124. Th.
iii. 100, 109.

* Etienne Jacques Joseph Macdonald, one of the most spotless and distinguished marshals of France, was born at Sédan, the birthplace of Turenne,

CHAP. afterwards Duke of Tarentum, and victor of the field
X. of Wagram.

1792.

25.

Consternation in the rear of the French army.

Their arrival totally changed the state of affairs. The spirit of the French soldiers was prodigiously elated by so great an accession of strength. It was no longer a corps of twenty-five thousand who maintained an unequal struggle with eighty thousand enemies, but a great army, seventy thousand strong, which sought to measure its strength with the invaders. Meanwhile, however, disorder and dismay, the consequence of their recent disasters, prevailed in the rear of the French position. The fugitives from Vaux, who fled almost thirty leagues into the interior, declared everywhere that the army was destroyed, that Dumourier was a traitor, and that all was lost. The national guard and gendarmerie at Rheims, Soissons, and Châlons, were seized by the same spirit; pillage became universal; the corps disbanded, and wreaked their disappointment on their own officers, many of whom they put to death. Such was the general consternation, that the people of the capital began to despair of the Republic, and hesitation became visible in the new levies who were daily forwarded from its gates to the frontier.¹ Nothing could be clearer than that, if the Allies had acted with the least vigour at this period, they could with ease have arrived at

¹ Toul, ii. 322. Th. iii. 110. Dum. iii. 39. St Cyr, i. 74, 75. Introd.

on 17th November 1765. He was descended, as his name indicates, from an old Scottish family, whose fidelity to their monarchs in misfortune had led them to follow the fortunes of the exiled Stuarts to St Germain. He entered early in life into the legion of Maillebois, raised for the purpose of aiding the French party in Holland. He was afterwards transferred as sub-lieutenant into the Irish regiment of Dillon, in which he was when the Revolution broke out. Upon that event, though strongly attached to the Royalist party, he did not quit France, being induced to remain there by an attachment to the daughter of M. Jacob, who had embraced the popular side. To that fortunate circumstance he with reason ascribed his subsequent elevation, for it retained him in the path where promotion was to be acquired and glory won. His abilities for military combination procured him a place, at the commencement of hostilities, first on the staff of General Beurnonville, and afterwards of General Dumourier. Such was the valour he displayed at Jemappes, that he was made colonel of the old regiment of Picardy on the spot, and he commanded that body in the subsequent invasion of Flanders. He did not follow Dumourier in his abandonment of the Republican cause, but continued to serve under Pichegru in the Army of the North in the campaign of 1794.

Paris, and crushed the Revolution before it had acquired either the energy or consistency of military strength.

The troops of Beurnonville, which arrived first, were stationed at Sainte-Cohiers. When those of Kellermann came up, Dumourier ordered them to encamp between Dampierre and Elise, behind the river Aube; and, as an attack from the enemy was anticipated, to advance in that event to the heights of VALMY. Kellermann conceived the order to mean, that he should take post there from the first, and accordingly occupied the heights with all his artillery and baggage, and began to erect his tents. The confusion occasioned by their arrival attracted the attention of the Prussians, who had arrived on the opposite heights of La Lune, and led to an action inconsiderable in itself, but most important in the consequences which it produced. The Duke of Brunswick, hearing of the departure of Dumourier from the camp at Grandpré, at length put his troops in motion, passed the now unguarded defiles of the forest, and on the 18th crossed the Aisne, and advanced between the French army and Paris. By this bold movement he hoped to cut off the enemy from their resources, and compel them either to abandon the capital or surrender.¹ In this way the hostile armies were placed in the most singular position; the Prussians faced towards the Rhine, and had their back to Champagne,

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X.

1792.

26.

Positions
taken up by
the French
troops.

¹ Jom. ii.
124. Th. ii.
115. Toul.
ii. 324.
Dum. iii. 41.

against the English, in the course of which he greatly distinguished himself. In 1798 he was employed under Massena and Berthier in the invasion of the Roman States, and inflicted a notable defeat on Mack, at the head of the unwarlike troops of Naples, in the neighbourhood of Otricoli. After this he took part in the invasion and easy conquest of Naples; carried the ramparts of Capua, and on the retirement of Championnet from the supreme command, became general-in-chief of the republican forces in the Neapolitan territory. Thenceforward his name will be found blended with many of the most important and interesting events of this history. Though often defeated, Macdonald's reputation never suffered: his noble charge at the head of the French reserve decided the battle of Wagram in favour of Napoleon; and, amidst the general defection of his other marshals, he exhibited a glorious example of fidelity to him amidst the disasters of Fontainebleau. Other marshals of the empire have exceeded him in the lustre of their military achievements—none have equalled him in the purity of his character, and his adherence, amid all the revolutions of fortune, to the principles of honour.—See *Biographie Universelle*, lxxii. 268 (MACDONALD).

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X.

while Dumourier, with his rear at the forest of Argonne, faced towards the French capital.

1792.
27.
Cannonade
of Valmy.
Sept. 28.

Arrived on the heights of La Lune, on the morning of the 20th, in a thick haze, the Prussians, when the vapours cleared away, perceived the French opposite to them on the heights of Valmy. A cannonade immediately commenced. Dumourier, perceiving that it was too late to draw Kellermann back to the camp originally assigned to him, immediately detached nine battalions and eight squadrons, under General Chazot, to his support ; while General Steingel was placed, with sixteen battalions, on the heights which commanded the position of Valmy on the right. The Duke of Brunswick formed his army in three columns, and seemed disposed to commence an attack by the oblique method, the favourite mode at that time in the Prussian forces. An accidental explosion of some ammunition waggons, near the mill of Valmy, occasioned a momentary disorder in the French army, and, if followed up by a vigorous attack, would probably have led to a total defeat. But the powerful fire of the French artillery, the energetic conduct of Kellermann, and the steady front exhibited by his troops, disconcerted the Prussians, and induced the Duke to hesitate before engaging his troops in a general action. The affair terminated in a vigorous cannonade on both sides, and the superb columns of the Prussians were drawn off at night without having fired a shot. Kellermann bivouacked after the action on the heights of Valmy, and the Prussians on those of La Lune, barring the great road to Châlons, and still between Dumourier and Paris.¹

¹ Dum. iii.
41, 44, 45.
Journ. ii. 131.
Toul. iii. 330.
331. Th. iii.
112, 113.

28.
Great effects
of this affair.

It is with an invading army as with an insurrection : an indecisive action is equivalent to a defeat. The affair of Valmy was merely a cannonade ; the total loss on each side did not exceed eight hundred men : the bulk of the forces on neither was drawn out. Not a musket-shot had been fired, nor a sabre-wound given. It was evident to both armies that political considerations had here over-

ruled the military operations of the Allies, and that no real trial of strength had taken place. Yet it produced upon the invaders consequences equivalent to those of the most terrible overthrow. The Duke of Brunswick no longer ventured to despise an enemy who had shown so much steadiness under a severe fire of artillery. Defeat had been avoided when most dreaded : the elevation of victory, the self-confidence which insures it, had passed over to the other side. Gifted with an uncommon degree of intelligence, and influenced by an ardent imagination, the French soldiers are easily depressed by disaster, but proportionally raised by success ; they rapidly make the transition from one state of feeling to the other. From the cannonade at Valmy may be dated the commencement of the career of victory which carried their armies to Vienna and the Kremlin.¹

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X.

1792.

¹ Toul. ii.
334. Jom.
ii. 131. Th.
iii. 113.
Dum. iii. 44.
Hard. i. 478,
479.

After the action, Kellermann was withdrawn from the heights of Valmy to the ground originally assigned him in the intrenched camp, while the Prussians strengthened themselves in their position on the heights of La Lune, still covering the great road to Châlons and Paris. The Executive Council evinced great disquietude at the situation of the armies, as well they might, as it left Paris entirely unprotected, and the Prussian army interposed between their own troops and that capital. They repeatedly urged Dumourier to change his ground for such a position as might cover Châlons, Meaux, and Rheims, which were threatened by the enemy's light troops. He replied, with the firmness of a great general, that he would maintain his present position ; and, so far from detaching forces to cover Châlons, he gave orders for the troops which were collecting there to advance nearer to the scene of action. Irritated by his refusal to obey these orders, the Committee of Public Salvation threatened to deprive Dumourier of his command, if he did not comply with their instructions : but he wrote in answer, " You may do so ; but I shall keep my dismissal secret

29.
French re-
tain their
position.

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X.

1792.

¹ *Jom.* ii.
134. *Dum.*
iii. 44, 47.
Th. iii. 116,
117. *Ann.*
Reg. xxxiii.
30. *Lam.*
Hist. des
Gir. iv. 48.

30.
Secret ne-
gotiation
between the
Duke of
Brunswick
and Du-
mourier.

till I see the enemy retire. I shall then show it to my soldiers, and return to Paris to receive punishment for having saved my country in spite of itself." Meanwhile he neglected nothing which might encourage the soldiers, and keep alive their hopes. Night and day he was to be seen at their watch-fires, conversing with the common men, and predicting the speedy retreat of their enemies. By these means he appeased their discontent, and, by communicating to them his views, inspired them with his confidence. Meanwhile, the position of Islettes was still preserved; and an attack, by a detachment of the Allies, on that important pass, was defeated by the obstinate resistance of the officer in command.¹

The conduct of the Duke of Brunswick, both in this action, and the movements for three weeks which had preceded it, would be altogether inexplicable, if the external aspect of the military events alone was considered. But the truth was, as has at length been revealed, that during all this period a secret negotiation was in dependence between him and Dumourier, the object of which was to obtain, after a little delay, the recognition of the constitutional throne by the latter, and the junction of his army to the invading force. This negotiation was skilfully conducted by the French general, who constantly held out that he was in reality favourable to the King and the constitution, and would show himself so when the proper time arrived; but that, in order to do this with effect, it was necessary to wait for the arrival of the other corps-d'armée, as without an imposing force such a declaration would not be attended with the desired effect at Paris, and that any disaster in the mean time would put an end to all his designs. By these plausible but insidious communications, Dumourier gained time to retire from the Argonne forest to Ste-Ménéhould without molestation, and completely paralysed his antagonist, till the arrival of the expected reinforcements put him in a situation to throw off the mask, and openly resist the Allied arms.²

² *Hard.* i.
471. *Cap.*
Eur. i. 161,
162.

The same secret negotiation which had already arrested their movements, restrained the Prussian arms on the field of Valmy ; the Duke of Brunswick was fearful, by a decided action and probable victory, of converting a promised ally into a decided opponent.* No sooner was the cannonade concluded than the interchange of secret messengers became more active than ever. Lombard, private secretary to the Duke, suffered himself to be made prisoner in disguise by the French patrols, and conducted the negotiation. The Duke insisted on the immediate liberation of the King, and re-establishment of a constitutional monarchy ; while the French general avowed that these were the objects which he really cherished at the bottom of his heart, but that, in order to carry these intentions into effect with any prospect of success, it was indispensable, in the first place, that the Allies should retire and evacuate the French territory ; that their doing so would give him so much influence that he had no doubt of being able to achieve these desirable objects, and that he pledged his word of honour to do so ; whereas, if these terms were resisted, he would exert all the means in his power to destroy the invaders, which his present situation, at the head of a hundred thousand men, enabled him to effect without difficulty. He added, that the necessary effect of such a continuance of the contest would be the destruction of the King and the royal family, whose lives were already menaced by the anarchical faction who held the reins of power at Paris.¹

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X.

1792.

31.

Which also
paralysed
the Allies on
the field of
Valmy.¹ Hard. i.
486, 487.
Cap. Eur. i.
171, 172.

These representations of Dumourier made a great impression at the Allied headquarters. The danger to the King's person was evident, from the violence of the Jacobins, and the frightful massacre in the prisons which had already taken place. The conduct of the Republi-

32.

Effect of
these nego-
tiations on
the Allied
movements.

* This was openly alluded to in the Prussian official despatch giving an account of the battle. "From the general to the lowest soldier the most enthusiastic spirit animated the army, and it would undoubtedly have gained a glorious victory, if considerations of a still higher kind had not prevented the King from giving battle."—HARD. i. 482.

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1792.

cans, under the cannonade of Valmy, had demonstrated that their troops could at least stand fire, and were not disposed to join the invaders—circumstances which, in the most favourable view, presaged a severe and bloody contest before the war was brought to a successful issue. It seemed foreign to the interests of Prussia to risk its sovereign and the flower of its army by a further advance into France, in pursuance of objects in which it had no immediate or peculiar interest, and which, if too warmly pursued, would probably divert the national forces from the side of Poland, where real acquisitions for the monarchy were to be obtained. These considerations were strongly urged upon the King by his council, and the Duke of Brunswick, who had not altogether lost hopes that brilliant prospects still awaited him from the triumph of the liberal party in France. But the King steadily resisted, and, inflamed by military ardour, and a generous desire to save the august captives at Paris, warmly urged an immediate advance to the capital. “Who knows,” said the Duke of Brunswick, “that our first victory may not be the signal for the death of the King?”—“How fearful soever,” replied the monarch, “may be the situation of the royal family, I think we should not retire. I desire from the bottom of my heart to arrive in time to deliver the King of France ; but my first duty is to save Europe.”¹

¹ Harl. i. 486, 494.
Cap. Eur. i. 181, 184.
Lam. Hist. des Gir. iii. 298.

33.
The emigrants advocate an advance to Paris.

The French emigrant noblesse strongly supported this courageous resolution. “A methodical war,” said they in September 1792, “may be the most prudent against a regular power, the forces and strength of which are known ; but those of France during a revolution cannot be thus estimated. Its armies, at present far from numerous, and ill-disciplined, will become habituated to war, will be multiplied tenfold, if they are allowed time : the soldiers, the chiefs, will alike learn by experience. Revolutionary fanaticism will every day make greater progress in the minds of the people ; and soon they will

become ungovernable by any other method but force. At present they hesitate: they have not declared themselves openly. They are waiting for some decisive event — some striking success, to show them to which side victory is likely to incline. It was neither after the battle of the Trebbia, nor of Thrasymane, that the allies and subjects of the Roman republic declared themselves; but no sooner did Hannibal march forward and gain the victory of Cannæ, than nearly the whole subject towns and nations rose and solicited his alliance. It is to Paris that we should march, and arrive like a thunderbolt, in order to prevent the factions from completing their measures for raising the immense, and now inert mass of the nation.” This adds another to the many proofs with which history abounds, that the truth is generally as clearly perceived by some, during the course of events, as it is afterwards by all the world; and that it is to the prejudice or timidity which prevents their advice being followed, that the greatest public calamities are generally owing.¹

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¹ Discours
des Emigrés
au Roi de
Prusse, 21st
August.
Bert. de
Moll. Hist.
de la Rév.
x. 25, 26.

The negotiation, however, notwithstanding these pressing arguments, still continued. The King of Prussia offered terms on which he was willing immediately to evacuate the French territory;* but, in answer, he received a bulletin, containing the decree of the Assembly abolishing royalty in France, and converting the kingdom into a republic. Filled with consternation at this intelligence, the Prussian envoys returned mournfully to their camp; and Dumourier artfully took advantage of the general alarm, to represent that he was as much distressed as any one at the turn affairs had taken at Paris;

34.
Progress of
the negotia-
tion.

* They were —

“ 1. The King disclaims all intention to restore the ancient regime, but wishes only the establishment of such a constitution as may be for the advantage of the kingdom.

“ 2. He insists that all propagandism should cease in his own dominions, and those of his allies.

“ 3. That the king should be set at liberty.

“ 23d September 1792.”

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X.

1792.

that the Republican party was now triumphant, and could be overthrown only by the restoration of calmer ideas on the return of peace; but that nothing could be more certain, than that any further advance of the invaders would involve in instantaneous ruin the King, the royal family, and the whole nobility, and render utterly hopeless the restoration of legitimate authority. While skilfully making use of these painful and too probable considerations to paralyse the Allied armies, and cause them to waste the time in fruitless negotiations, Dumourier apprised the government at Paris of all that was going forward, and informed them that he was satisfied that the distress was very great in the army of the invaders, and that by a little further firmness on his part they would be driven to a disastrous retreat.* At the same time he wrote a long memorial to the King of Prussia, in which he adduced every argument calculated to shake his resolution to advance further, and insisted, in an especial manner, on the danger to which it would expose the King of France.¹

¹ Hard. i.
499, 509.

35.
Intrigues at
the Prussian
headquar-
ters.

Frederick-William, however, remained firm; neither the strong representations of his generals as to the danger of his army, nor the still more pressing perils of the King of France, could shake his resolution. At a council of war, held at headquarters on the 27th of September, at which the ministers of Austria and Russia assisted, it was resolved to advance and give battle on

* "The proposals of the King of Prussia," said he, "do not appear to offer a basis for a negotiation, but they demonstrate that their distress is very great—a fact sufficiently indicated by the wretchedness of their bread, the multitude of their sick, and the languor of their attacks. I am persuaded that the King of Prussia is now heartily sorry at being so far in advance, and would readily adopt any means of extricating himself from his embarrassments. He keeps so near me, from the wish to engage us in a combat as the only means he has of escaping; for if I keep within my intrenchments for eight days longer, his army will dissolve of itself from want of provisions. I will undertake no serious negotiation without your authority, and without receiving from you the basis on which it is to be conducted. All that I have hitherto done without M. Manstein is to gain time, and commit no one."—*Secret Despatch, DUMOURIER to the French Government, 24th September.* HARD. i. 500.

the 29th. But before this resolution could be carried into execution, intelligence was received, which gave the numerous party in the Prussian cabinet, who longed for peace, the ascendant. A decree of the Committee of Public Salvation was brought to headquarters, in which it had been unanimously resolved to enter into no negotiation until the Prussian troops had entirely evacuated the French territory. Advices at the same time arrived from London and the Hague, containing the refusal of the cabinet of St James's and the States-general to join the coalition. The generals now redoubled their representations on the disastrous state of the army; and the Countess Lichtenau, the King's mistress, yielding to a large bribe from the French government, employed her too powerful influence for the same object.¹ Assailed at once in so many different quarters, and overcome by the representations of his generals as to the necessity of the measure, the King at length yielded; and on the 29th the orders given for battle were revoked, and a retreat was resolved on. It was agreed between the generals of the two armies, that the Prussians, on condition of evacuating the fortresses of which they had made themselves masters, should not be disquieted in their rear; and Dumourier, delighted at being relieved by his skill and firmness from the overwhelming dangers by which he had been surrounded, wrote to the Convention,—“The Republic owes its salvation to the retreat of the Prussians. Had I not resolved to resist the universal opinion of all around me, the enemy was saved, and France in danger.”²

In coming to this determination, the Prussian cabinet were governed, not less by the old standing jealousy of Austria, which at that period so strongly influenced both their councils and the feelings of the people, than by the prospect of dangers from a further advance. The King, in entering upon the campaign, had contemplated only a rapid march to Paris; but the protraction of the war,

CHAP.
X.

1792.

Sept. 25.

¹ Hard. ii.
45.

Sept. 29.

² Secret
Despatch,
Oct. 1.
Hard. ii. 2.

36.

Motives
which in-
duced the
Allies to
retreat.

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X.

1792.

and increasing resistance of the French, rendered it evident that that object could not easily be accomplished, and that its prosecution would seriously endanger the long hoped-for Polish acquisitions, while the dethronement and captivity of Louis exposed him to imminent hazard, if the army continued its advance towards the capital. The event soon justified the confidence of the French general. Dumourier was at the head of sixty thousand men, including twelve thousand horse, even after all the losses of the campaign; his artillery was numerous, and his position excellent; while large detachments were rapidly forming at Châlons, Rheims, Soissons, Epernay, and all the towns in the interior. His troops, though somewhat affected by the severity of the weather, were upon the whole in good health and condition; and sufficient supplies arrived for the camp from Sedan and Metz, which still remained in the power of the French.¹

¹ St Cyr, i. 80, 81. Jom. ii. 133, 137. Th. iii. 120. Dum. iii. 20.

37.
Distress of
the Allies,
who resolve
to retire.

On the other hand, the condition of the Allied army was daily becoming more critical. Their convoys, harassed by the garrisons of Sedan and Montmedy, and drawn from the remote provinces of Luxembourg and Trèves by the pass of Grandpré, arrived very irregularly; the soldiers had been already four days without rations, and subsisted on corn steeped in unwholesome water. The plains of Champagne were sterile, destitute alike of water, forage, and provisions. The rains had set in with more than usual severity, and the troops, bivouacked on the open plain, were severely affected with dysenteries, and other contagious maladies, which had already cut off one-third from the effective strength of the army. In these circumstances, to advance further at this late season into the enemy's territory would have been an act of the highest temerity, and might have endangered the safety of the King of Prussia, as well as his whole forces. An attack on the French intrenched camp was of doubtful success; failure in such an enterprise certain ruin. The only rational plan was to retire into the fertile district

of the three bishoprics, form the siege of Montmedy, and take up their quarters in Lorraine for the winter, retaining as their advanced posts the defiles in the Argonne forest which they had acquired. But this project was inconsistent with the secret convention which had been adopted, and therefore a retreat to the Rhine was resolved on.¹

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¹ St Cyr, i.
80, 82.
Jom. ii. 133.
Dum. iii. 20.

But while these perplexities were accumulating on the Allied forces, it was with the utmost difficulty that Dumourier was able to maintain his position against the reiterated orders of the Convention, and the representations of the officers in his own camp. The French government was in the greatest alarm at finding no regular force between the capital and the Allies. The detached corps of the enemy, who spread as far as Rheims, diffused a general consternation over the whole country. Courier after courier was despatched to the general, with orders to quit his position, and draw near to Paris, and in these representations Kellermann and the other officers of the army warmly joined. The great concentration of forces soon occasioned a want of provisions in the camp; the soldiers were at last two or three days without bread; and attempts at mutiny were already beginning, especially in the battalions of Fédérés, recently arrived from Paris. Even the superior officers began to be impressed with the necessity of retreating; and Kellermann urged such a movement with so much earnestness that the general was obliged to promise, like Columbus, that if the object of his wishes was not attained in a given number of days, he would retire. But the firmness of Dumourier triumphed over every obstacle; and it was by impressing upon his soldiers the truth, that whichever of the parties could fast longest would prove victorious, that he inspired them with resolution to surmount all their privations.²

38.

Consternation at Paris,
from the retreat to Ste-
Ménehould.

² Dum. iii.
54, 60. Th.
iii. 116.

An armistice of the limited sort above mentioned, which stipulated only that the Allies should not be

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X.

1792.

39.

Conferences
opened for
the retreat
of the Prus-
sians, who
retire.

Sept. 30.

molested in their rear during their retreat, and left the French at perfect liberty to harass the flanks of the invading army, was instantly taken advantage of by Dumourier. On the same day on which it was concluded, he detached several corps, which forced back the most advanced parties of the enemy, which had spread such dismay through the interior, and, gradually pressing round their flanks, at length hemmed in their rear, cut off their detachments, and intercepted their convoys. Experience seldom teaches nations wisdom ; an error of precisely the same nature was committed by Napoleon, with still more disastrous consequences, in the armistice between Murat and Kutusoff, near Moscow, in the Russian campaign. On the 30th September the Allies commenced their retreat, and repassed the defiles of the Argonne forest without molestation on the 2d and 3d October. Kellermann in vain urged the commander to adopt more vigorous measures to harass their march, and strongly recommended the immediate detachment of a large body upon Clermont. In consequence of the secret understanding with the enemy, and of a distrust of his own troops in field movements in presence of so disciplined a force as the Prussians, Dumourier allowed them to retreat in perfect tranquillity, and in the most leisurely manner. On the first day they retired only three miles, and without abandoning any of their equipage ; and it was not till the defile of Grandpré was passed, and the Prussians were fifteen leagues in advance, that Kellermann was detached in pursuit. The Allies withdrew in the finest order, and in the most pacific manner, though dreadfully weakened by disease.¹

¹ Join. ii.
133, 139.
Th. iii. 122.
Toul. ii. 345,
349. Dum.
iii. 63, 65.

40.
Their un-
molested
retreat.

Relieved by the retreat of the Prussians from the pressing danger which had obliged him to concentrate his forces, Dumourier conceived himself at liberty to resume his favourite project of an invasion of Flanders. Leaving, therefore, Kellermann with forty thousand men to follow the retiring columns, he sent thirty thousand to

the army of the north, under Beurnonville, and he himself repaired to Paris. The force with which the Prussians retired was about fifty-six thousand men,* the remainder of their force having remained behind or fallen sick. Their retreat was conducted throughout in the most imposing manner, taking position and facing about on occasion of every halt. It was impossible, consequently, for the French general, with his inconsiderable force, to make any impression on the retiring mass ; and the French generals, satisfied with saving the Republic, appear to have been rather disposed to make a bridge of gold for a flying enemy. In virtue of the secret understanding already mentioned, no molestation was offered to the invaders in their retreat. Verdun and Longwy were successively abandoned. In the end of October the Allies evacuated France, and the troops of Kellermann went into cantonments between the bastions of Longwy and the Moselle. On getting possession of the ceded fortresses, the commissaries of the Convention took a bloody revenge on the royalist party. A number of beautiful young women, who had presented garlands of flowers to the King of Prussia during the advance of the army, were sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and condemned to death. The Prussians left behind them, on their route, the most melancholy proofs of the disasters of the campaign. All the villages were filled with the dead and dying. Without any considerable fighting, the Allies had lost, by dysentery and fevers, twenty-five thousand men, or more than a fourth of their numbers.¹

While these decisive events were taking place in the central provinces, operations of minor importance, but yet material to the issue of the campaign, were going on

	Infantry.	Cavalry.
* Prussians, . . .	26,850	7,426
Austrians, . . .	10,000	...
French Emigrants, . . .	8,400	3,600
	45,250	11,026 56.276.

State given in BERTRAND DE MOLLEVILLE, x. 41.

CHAP. X.	upon the two flanks in Alsace and in the Low Countries.
1792.	The principal forces of both parties having been drawn
41. Operations in Flanders. Siege of Lisle.	from the Netherlands, to strengthen the armies of the
	centre, the movements there were necessarily inconsider-
	able. The French camp at Maulde was broken up, and
	a retreat commenced to the intrenched position at
	Bruillé, a stronghold somewhat in the rear. But in
Sept. 14.	executing this movement, the retreating force was, on
	14th September, attacked and completely routed by the
	Austrians, with the loss of all their artillery, equipage,
	and ammunition. Encouraged by this easy success, the
	invaders, under the Archduke Albert, with a force of
	twenty-five thousand, undertook the siege of Lisle, one of
	the strongest towns in Europe, and which, in 1708, had
	made a glorious defence against the united armies of
	Eugene and Marlborough. The garrison, consisting of
	ten thousand men, and the commander, a man of courage
	and energy, were devoted to the cause of the Republic.
	In these circumstances, little success could be hoped for
Sept. 29.	from a regular siege ; but the Austrians endeavoured to
	intimidate the governor by the terror of a bombardment,
	which was continued night and day for a whole week.
	This terrible tempest produced little impression upon the
	soldiers, who, secure within bomb-proof casemates, be-
	held it fall with indifference upon the defenceless inhabi-
	tants ; but upon the people in the vicinity it produced
	such extreme consternation, that it was afterwards ascer-
	tained that, had Lisle been taken, almost all the other
	frontier towns would at once have capitulated, to avoid a
	similar fate. The Austrians, in fact, would have acquired,
	by the capture of this important city, a firm footing
	within the French frontier, attended by the most impor-
	tant effect upon the future issue of the campaign. But
	their operations were interrupted by the retreat of the
	Duke of Brunswick, and the approach of considerable
	forces from various quarters to raise the siege. The
	inhabitants bore with heroic firmness the horrors of a

bombardment, which was continued with unprecedented vigour on the part of the enemy, and consumed a considerable portion of the city; and during the siege General Lamartillière effected his entry with above ten thousand men, so that the besieged became equal to the besieging force. This circumstance, joined to the exhaustion of their ammunition, and the approach of a body detached by Dumourier to threaten their operations, induced the Austrians to abandon their enterprise; and on the 7th October the siege was raised, and the troops withdrawn from the French territory. The terrors of the conflagration, and the glorious issue of the siege, were deservedly celebrated throughout all France, and contributed not a little to augment that energetic spirit which now animated the inhabitants even of the most distant departments, and soon became so formidable to the neighbouring states.¹

Meanwhile General Biron, who commanded forty-five thousand men in Alsace, consumed the most important period of the campaign in tardy preparations. But at length General Custine, who was at the head of a force of seventeen thousand men, posted near Landau, undertook an offensive movement against Spire, where immense magazines had been collected. By a rapid advance he surrounded a corps of three thousand men, who were stationed near the city, and compelled them to surrender—an event which led to the immediate capture of Spire, Worms, and Frankenthal. This important success, which took place at the very time that the main body of the Allies was engaged in the Argonne forest, might have had the most important effect upon the future fate of the campaign, had Custine immediately obeyed the orders of the Convention, and, relinquishing his invasion of the Palatinate, turned with his victorious forces on the rear and communications of the Duke of Brunswick's army. But that general had other projects in view, which ultimately turned out not a little service-

CHAP.
X.

1792.

Oct. 7.

¹ *Jom. ii.*
170, 175,
176. *Th. iii.*
181. *Ann.*
Reg. 1793,
55, 56.

42.
Operations
on the Up-
per Rhine,
and capture
of Mayence.

Sept. 30.

CHAP.
X.

1792.

Oct. 21.

¹ Jom. ii.
148, 151,
157, 158.
Th. iii. 182.
Ann. Reg.
1793, 70, 71.
Hard. ii. 41.
61.

43.
The Duke
of Bruns-
wick re-
crosses the
Rhine.
Oct. 25.

able to the Republic. Disobeying the orders of government, he remained fourteen days in apparent inactivity in the Palatinate, but in reality carrying on a secret correspondence with the garrison and Jacobin Club in Mayence. In consequence, on the 18th October he moved at the head of twenty-two thousand men towards that city, which was invested on the 19th; and on the 21st, before a single battery had been raised, that important fortress, the key to the western provinces of the Empire, surrendered by capitulation, the garrison of four thousand men being allowed to retire, on the condition of not serving against the French for twelve months. Thus did the Allies lose the only fortified post which they possessed on the Rhine—a signal proof of the rashness and presumption with which they had penetrated into the heart of France, without securing in an adequate manner their base of operations or means of retreat.¹

Urged on by the desire to levy contributions, which the distressed state of his army in fact rendered a matter of necessity, Custine made a useless incursion to Frankfurt, which was of no real service to the campaign; while the Duke of Brunswick, terrified at the loss of Mayence, advanced by forced marches from the neighbourhood of Luxembourg to Coblenz, where his forces defiled over the Rhine by a flying bridge for twelve successive days. Immediate dissolution now threatened the noble army which had so lately carried terror into the heart of France, and so nearly crushed the whole forces of the Revolution. The gallant corps of the emigrant noblesse was speedily disbanded from want of any resources to keep it together; the Austrians, under Clairfait, were recalled to the defence of the Low Countries; and the Prussians put into cantonments on the right bank of the Rhine. Thus was completed the dislocation of that splendid army, which a few months before had entered France with such brilliant prospects, and by which, if properly directed, might have been achieved the deliver-

ance of Europe from the scourge of democratic ambition. What oceans of blood required to be shed, how many provinces were laid waste, how many cities destroyed, how many millions of brave men slaughtered, before the vantage-ground could be regained, before the plains of Champagne again beheld a victorious enemy, or a righteous retribution was taken for the sins of the conquering republic ! ¹

CHAP.
X.

1792.

¹ Jom. ii.
160, 161.
St Cyr, i. 8,
9. Th. iii.
185, 186.
Hard. ii. 61,
73.

The final retreat of the Allies left Dumourier at liberty to carry into execution a project he had long meditated—that of invading the Low Countries, and rescuing these fine provinces from the Austrian dominion. The advantages of this design were evident : to advance the frontiers of the Republic to the Rhine, to draw from the conquered provinces the means of carrying on the war, to stir up the germ of revolution in Flanders, reinforce the armies by the discontented spirits in that populous country, and extinguish the English influence in Holland, were objects worthy of the conqueror of Brunswick. He received unlimited powers from the government ; and the losses sustained by the Allies during their invasion, as well as the reinforcements he was constantly receiving, gave him a great superiority of force. The right wing, composed of a large portion of the troops detached from the Argonne forest, consisted of sixteen thousand men ; between that and the centre was placed General Harville, with fourteen thousand. Dumourier himself commanded the main body, consisting of forty thousand men ; while the left wing, under Labourdonnaye, was about thirty thousand strong—in all, a hundred thousand men, all animated by the highest spirits, and anticipating nothing but triumph and conquest, from their recent success over the Prussian invaders. ²

44.
Plan for the
invasion of
Flanders.

² Compare
Jom. ii. 215.
Toul. iii. 38,
39. Th. ii.
210, 211.
Ann. Regr.
1793, 59.
Dum. iii.
121.

To oppose this immense army, the Austrians had no adequate force at command. Their whole troops in Flanders, including the corps which General Clairfait had brought from the Duke of Brunswick's army, did not exceed forty thousand men, and were scattered, as was

45.
French in-
vasion of
Flanders.

CHAP.
X.

1792.

usually the case with them at this period, over too extended a line. The centre, under the command of the Archduke Albert, was stationed in front of the important city of Mons ; while the remainder of the army, dispersed over a front of nearly thirty miles, could render little assistance, in case of need, to the main body. This main body, numbering not above nineteen thousand men, was intrenched on a strong position near the village of JEMAPPES. The field of battle had been long before chosen by the Imperialists, and extended through the village of Jemappes, and in front of that of Cuesmes, from the heights of Jemappes on the one hand to those of Berthaimont and the village of Sifly on the other, over a succession of eminences which commanded all the adjacent plain. Fourteen redoubts, strengthened by all the resources of art, and armed by nearly a hundred pieces of artillery, seemed almost to compensate to the Austrians for their great inferiority of number. The French artillery, however, was nearly equal to that of their opponents, and their forces greatly superior, amounting to no less than forty thousand men ; and though many of these troops were inexperienced, recent triumphs had in an extraordinary degree elevated their courage. In this action, the new system of tactics was tried with signal success—viz. that of accumulating masses upon one point, and in this manner forcing some weak part of the position, and compelling the whole to be abandoned.¹

¹ *Jom.* ii.
217. *Dum.*
iii. 165, 169.
Toul. iii. 40.
54. *Ann.*
Reg. 1793.
61, 62.
Hard. ii. 45.
47. *Bert.*
de Moll. x.
197, 199.

46.
Battle of
Jemappes.
Nov. 6.

On the 6th November, the battle commenced at day-break. The French troops, who had been under arms or in bivouac for three successive days, received the order to advance with shouts of joy, moved forward with rapidity, and lost few men in traversing the plain which separated them from the enemy. The attack on the French right was commenced by General Beurnonville on the redoubts which crowned the heights in front of the village of Cuesmes. A severe fire of artillery for some hours arrested his efforts. On the other flank the hamlet of Jemappes was at length

turned, and the redoubts, as well as that village upon the right of the Austrian position, were carried by the impetuous attack of the columns of the French left wing under Ferrand and Rosière. Dumourier seized this moment to make his centre, under the Duc de Chartres, advance against the fortified heights on the Austrian left of Jemappes. The column moved forward rapidly, and with little loss; but, on approaching the intrenchments, they were attacked in flank by some squadrons of horse, which pierced the mass, and drove back a portion of the French cavalry which supported it. The moment was in the highest degree critical; for at the same instant the leading battalions, checked by a tremendous fire of grape-shot, were beginning to waver at the foot of the redoubts. In this extremity, the heroism of a brave valet of Dumourier's, named Baptiste, who rallied the broken troops, arrested the victorious squadrons of the Austrians, while the intrepidity and conduct of a young general restored the front of the line. Quickly forming the broken regiments into one column, which he called the column of Jemappes, he placed himself at its head, and renewed the attack on the redoubts with so much vigour, that they were all carried, and the Austrians at length driven from their intrenchments in the centre of the field. This young officer was the Duc de Chartres, afterwards LOUIS PHILIPPE, King of the French. Such was the enthusiasm of the French in those early days of the Revolution, that the Duc de Chartres in this attack was attended by two young heroines, Théophile and Felicité Fernig, who combated in military dress at the head of the column. The former engaged in single combat, and made prisoner, an Austrian colonel, whom she conducted, like Clorinda, in the "Jerusalem Delivered," disarmed, to General Ferrand, who commanded in that quarter of the field.¹*

¹ Dum. iii.
169, 173.
Toul. iii. 49.
Ann. Reg.
1793, 62.
Th. iii. 241.
245. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. v. 226.

* Théophile and Felicité Fernig, who acquired great celebrity in the early annals of the Revolution, were the daughters of M. de Fernig, a retired officer in the village of Mortagne, on the extreme frontier of France, adjoining Flanders. Their father commanded the national guard of Mortagne; and his

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X.

1792.

47.

Victory of
the French.

While the battle was contested with so much obstinacy in the centre, Dumourier had equal cause for anxiety on the right. Beurnonville, though at first successful on that side, had paused when he beheld the confusion of the central division ; and his movements vacillated between a desire to maintain the ground he had won, and anxiety to draw back his forces to support the column which seemed in such confusion in the plain. This hesitation was soon perceived by the enemy : the fire of the French artillery could hardly equal that of five redoubts which played upon their ranks ; and a large body of Imperial cavalry was in front, ready to charge on the first appearance of disorder. Dumourier upon this hastened to the spot, rode along the front of two brigades of his old soldiers from the camp at Maulde, who rent the air with cries of *Vive Dumourier!* and succeeded in rallying the squadrons of horse, who were beginning to fall into confusion. The Imperial cavalry charged immediately after, but, being received by a volley within pistol-shot from the infantry, turned about in confusion ; and the French dragoons being immediately detached in pursuit, the Austrian horse were irretrievably routed, and fled in confusion to Mons. Animated by this success, Dumourier made the victorious brigades chant the Marseillaise Hymn, and taking advantage of their enthusiasm, rushed forward at their head, and entered the redoubts by the gorge. Being still uneasy about the centre, however, he set off immediately on gaining this success, at the head of six squadrons of cavalry, to reinforce the Duc de Chartres ;¹ but he had not

¹ Dum. iii.
173, 175.
Toul. iii. 49.
Th. iii. 242,
246. Ann.
Reg. 1793,
62, 63.
Hard. ii. 45,
47.

two daughters, unknown to their father, joined in its ranks, in the uniform of their brothers, who had departed for the army. Their secret was long kept ; but at length it was discovered by M. Beurnonville, from their timidity in receiving his public thanks for the gallantry they had displayed with their comrades in an action with the Austrians. They accompanied Dumourier on horseback during the battle of Jemappes, and had previously braved the terrors of the cannonade of Valmy. During the whole war in Flanders their bravery was conspicuous ; and, what was perhaps still more remarkable, they preserved untouched, amidst the license and danger of a camp, their virgin honour and reputation. Their names were more than once mentioned with deserved honour in the Convention. — See LAMARTINE, *Hist. des Girondins*, v. 222, 224.

proceeded above a few hundred paces when he met his aid-de-camp, the young Duc de Montpensier, with the joyful intelligence that the battle was there already won, and that the Austrians were retiring at all points to Mons.

Such was the famous battle of Jemappes; the first pitched battle which had been gained by the Republican armies, and on that account both celebrated at the time, and important in its consequences, beyond the real merits of the contest. The loss on both sides was nearly equal. That of the Austrians amounted to five thousand men; they withdrew all their artillery, except fourteen pieces, and retired in good order to Mons. The French lost above six thousand men; but the consequences of the victory on the spirits and moral strength of the two parties were incalculable, and in fact led to the immediate conquest of the whole Netherlands. These great results, however, were rather owing to the terrors of the Imperialists, than to the vigorous measures of the French general. On the 7th he entered Mons, which opened its gates without resistance, and remained there in perfect inactivity for five days. Meanwhile the Austrian authorities took to flight in the rear, and abandoning Brussels, sought refuge in Ruremonde. The French, in the course of their advance, were everywhere received with enthusiasm; Ath, Tournay, Neuport, Ostend, and Bruges, opened their gates; and, after a slight skirmish with the rearguard, Brussels itself was occupied by their victorious troops. On the right, General Valence captured Charleroi, and advanced to Namur; while on the left Labourdonnaye, after much hesitation, moved forward to Ghent and Antwerp. Before the end of November the Imperialists retained nothing of their possessions in the Low Countries but the citadels of the latter important city and Namur.¹

The magnitude of these successes excited the jealousy of the Republican party at Paris. On the very day of the cannonade at Valmy, the Republic had been proclaimed, and royalty abolished over France. The rapid

CHAP.
X.

1792.

48.

Results of
the battle.
Tardy ad-
vance of
Dumourier.
Conquest of
Flanders.Nov. 8 to
12.Nov. 14.
1 Toul. iii.
50, 52.
Jom. ii. 236,
239, 243.
Ann. Reg.
1793, 63.
Th. iii. 246.

49.

Jealousy of
Dumourier
at Paris.

CHAP. X. conquests of the triumphant general awakened the alarms
 ----- of the Republican despots ; another Cæsar, a second
 1792. Cromwell was denounced ; Marat in his sanguinary
 journal, and Robespierre from the tribune, proclaimed
 him as threatening the liberty of the people. If the event
 in some degree justified their predictions, it must be
 conceded that they occasioned it, by showing him what
 fate he had to expect, if the chance of war, by exposing
 him to any considerable reverse, should place his head in
 their hands.¹

¹ Marat,
 Ami du
 Peuple,
 Nov. 4, and
 Dec. 16.
 Toul. iii. 52,
 53. Jom. ii.
 255. Th. iii.
 263.

50.
 French ad-
 vance to the
 Scheldt.
 Fall of
 Antwerp,
 and opening
 of that river.

While these jealousies were forming at the seat of power, the career of conquest brought Dumourier to the Scheldt, where events productive of the most important consequences took place. The Executive Council, by a decree on 16th November, commanded him to open that river to the Flemish vessels, in open defiance of the existing treaty with Holland—an event which could not fail to produce a rupture with the maritime powers. He, in consequence, directed a considerable body of forces to that quarter ; and Labourdonnaye, after having made himself master of Malines, and a large depot of military stores which were placed in that city, advanced towards Antwerp. He was there superseded by Dumourier, in consequence of suspicions of his fidelity to the Republican government, and the command given to Miranda, an officer of zeal and talent, who afterwards became celebrated for his attempts to restore the independence of South America. On the 30th November the citadel of that important city capitulated to the new commander, and the French became undisputed masters of the Scheldt. The Republican general lost no time in carrying into effect the favourite French project of opening that great artery of Flemish prosperity. He immediately wrote to Miranda,—“ Lose not a moment in despatching a flat-bottomed boat down the Scheldt, to ascertain whether the navigation is really impeded, or if it is merely a report spread by the Dutch. Do every-

thing in your power to open the stream to commercial enterprise, that the Flemings, contrasting the generosity of the Republic with the avarice of the Austrian government, who sold the navigation of the Scheldt to the Dutch for 7,000,000 florins, may be induced to adopt the genuine principles of freedom." Miranda lost no time in taking measures for carrying this design into execution; and in a few days the flotilla, moored at the mouth of the river, ascended to Antwerp amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants, who beheld in this auspicious event the dawn of a brighter era of commercial enterprise than had ever opened upon their city since the rise of the Dutch republic.¹

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¹ Ann. Reg.
1793, 64, 66.
Jom. ii. 247,
248. Th.
ii. 296.

While the left wing of the army was prosecuting these successes, the centre, under Dumourier himself, was also following the career of conquest. A strong rearguard of the main body of the Austrians, posted near Roucoux, was attacked on the 26th, and, after an obstinate engagement, the Imperialists retired, and the next morning Liege opened its gates to the victors. The revolutionary party immediately proceeded to measures of extreme violence in that city; a Jacobin club was formed, which speedily rivalled in energy and atrocity the parent institution in Paris; while the democratic party divided into opposite factions, on the formation of an independent republic, or a junction with France. Danton and Lacroix, the commissioners of the Convention, strongly supported the latter party, who speedily broke out into every species of violence. At the same time the right wing, under Valence, pressed the siege of the citadel of Namur. The Austrians, who had established themselves in the vicinity to annoy the Republicans, were first dislodged; and, the trenches being shortly after opened, the fort of Vilette, a strong work which impeded the operations of the besiegers, was carried by assault on the 30th November.² The citadel, in consequence, surrendered a few days after, and the garrison, consisting of above two thousand men, were

51.
Liege and
Namur
taken by
Dumourier
in person.
Dec. 7.

Dec. 2.
² Ann. Reg.
1793, 66, 67.
Th. iii. 266.
Jom. ii. 249.
Toul. iii.
252, 253.
Dec. 6.

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1792.

made prisoners of war. About the same time Miranda dispossessed the Imperialists from Ruremonde, and took possession of that city ; while, on the other side, Dumourier, after dislodging them from their position, covering Aix-la-Chapelle, made himself master also of that important city, the ancient capital of Charlemagne.

52.
Dumourier
puts his
army into
winter
quarters.

Dumourier now projected an irruption into the Dutch territory, and the siege of Maestricht, one of the principal frontier fortresses belonging to that republic. But the Executive Council, justly apprehensive of engaging at once in a war with the United Provinces and Great Britain, which was bound by treaty to support them, commanded him to desist from the enterprise ; and his force being now much weakened by sickness, want, fatigue, and the desertion of above ten thousand men, who had left their colours during the military license which followed the conquest of Belgium, and the loss of six thousand horses by the severity of the weather, he resolved to put his troops into winter quarters. His army, accordingly, was distributed in cantonments, in a line from Namur, by Aix-la-Chapelle, to Ruremonde. The Government urged him to continue his offensive operations, and to drive the Imperialists beyond the Rhine ; but the exhausted state of his soldiers rendered any further movements impracticable ; and, yielding to his urgent representations, they at length consented to their enjoying some weeks of repose.¹

Dec. 12.
1 Jom. ii.
250, 258,
259, 260.
Th. iii. 267.
Ann. Reg.
1793, 69.
Dum. iii.
230, 233.

53.
Decree of
the Conven-
tion against
all govern-
ments.
Nov. 19.

Flanders was not long of reaping the bitter fruits of republican conquest. On the 19th November the Convention, inflamed by the victory of Jemappes, published the famous Resolution, in which they declared, “ that they would grant fraternity and succour to every people who were disposed to recover their liberty ; and that they charged their generals to give aid to all such people, and to defend all citizens who had been, or might be, disquieted in the cause of freedom.” This decree, which was equivalent to a declaration of war against every established government, was ordered to be translated, and

published in all languages. And it was followed up on 15th December by another decree, calculated in an especial manner to injure the subjects of the conquered provinces. By this celebrated manifesto, as already mentioned, the Republic proclaimed, in all the countries which it conquered, "the sovereignty of the people, the suppression of all the constituted authorities, of tithes, and all subsisting taxes and imposts, of all feudal and territorial rights, of all the privileges of nobility, and exclusive privileges of every description. It announced to all their subjects liberty, fraternity, and equality; invited them to form themselves forthwith into primary assemblies, to elect an administration and provisional government, and declared that it would treat as enemies all persons who, refusing these benefits, or renouncing them, should show any disposition to preserve, recall, or treat with their prince, or any of the privileged castes." ¹ *

CHAP.
X.1792.
Dec. 15.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxi. 351,
352. Jom.
ii. 264, 265.
Pièces Just.
No. 8, 9.

This last decree excited as violent indignation in Belgium as the first had awakened alarm through all Europe. The Flemings were by no means disposed to abandon their ancient chiefs; and the feudal feelings, and religious impressions, which existed in great force in that country, were revolted at the sudden severing of all the ties which had hitherto been held most sacred. The dearest interests, the strongest attachments of nature were violated, when the whole ancient aristocracy of the land was uprooted, and a foundation laid for the formation of a new set of governors, elected by the universal suffrage of the inhabitants. Property of every kind, institutions of whatever duration, were threatened by so violent a shock to the fabric of society. Religion itself seemed to be menaced with destruction when tithes were extinguished, all ecclesiastical communities destroyed, and their property placed at the disposal of these new democratic assemblies. These feelings, natural on so extreme a change in any country, were in a peculiar manner roused in Flanders, in

54.
Violent
changes in-
troduced
into Bel-
gium.

* See *ante*, Chap. ix. § 117, for the text of these decrees.

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X.

1792.

¹ Jom. ii.
265. Th.
iii. 268.
Bert. de
Moll. x.
201, 206.

consequence of the powerful influence of the clergy over its inhabitants, and the vast number of established interests and great properties which were threatened by the sweeping changes of the French Convention. Nor was the exasperation diminished by the speeches of the orators who introduced the measure—Cambon, who moved the resolution, having spoken of the Low Countries as a conquered province ; and Brissot, who seconded it, warned the Belgians to adopt it, under pain of being “ put to the ban of French philosophy.”¹

55.
Dreadful oppression of the French Revolutionists in Flanders.

Immediately after issuing the decree, Flanders was inundated by a host of revolutionary agents, who, with liberty, patriotism, and protection in their mouths, had nothing but violence, confiscation, and bloodshed in their measures. Forced requisitions of men, horses, and provisions, enormous contributions levied by military execution, compulsory payment in the depreciated assignats of France, general spoliation of the churches, were among the first results of the democratic government. They gave Europe a specimen of the blessings of Republican government. The legions of fiscal agents and tax-gatherers who overspread the land, appeared actuated by no other motive but to wring the uttermost farthing out of the wretched inhabitants, and make their own fortunes out of a transient possession of the conquered districts. At their head were Danton, Lacroix, and Carrier, republicans of the sternest cast and the most rapacious dispositions, who infused their own infernal energy into all the inferior agents, and gave to the inhabitants of Flanders a foretaste of the Reign of Terror. Five-and-thirty commissioners, really chosen by the Jacobin Club in Paris, though nominally by the Convention, supported these three master-spirits in the work of spoliation. They were sent to Flanders, nominally, to organise the march of freedom—really, to plunder the whole aristocratic party. Immediately on their arrival, they divided that unhappy country into districts, and each in his domain proceeded to the work of appropriation. The peasants were driven by strokes of

the sabre, and at the point of the bayonet, to the primary assemblies which had been designated by the Convention ; while the churches, monasteries, and chateaus were plundered, the movables of every description sold, and the proceeds paid over to the French Commissioners. The estates of the clergy were everywhere put under sequestration, while valuable property of all descriptions, belonging to lay proprietors, was seized and sold ; and the unhappy owners, under the odious title of aristocrats, were too often sent off, with their wives and children, to the fortresses of France, there to remain as hostages for further requisitions.¹

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1792.

¹ Dum. iii.
278. Jom.
ii. 265.

The inhabitants of Flanders, awakened by these terrible calamities from the dream of liberty, speedily became as ardent for the restoration of their former government as they had ever been for its overthrow. The provinces of Brabant and Flanders, which had made such efforts to throw off the yoke of Joseph II., having tasted the consequences of republican conquest, were not less strenuous in their endeavours to rescue themselves from their liberators. The most violent indignation everywhere broke forth against the French government, and among none more vehemently than those who had hailed their approach as deliverers. A deputation was sent to the Emperor, imploring him to come to their deliverance, promising the aid of thirty thousand men, and large advances of money, if assistance was afforded them.² Such were the first fruits of republican conquest in Europe ; but they were not the last. The words of freedom are seductive to all ; its evils are known only to the actual sufferers. Europe required to suffer universally under the evils under which Flanders groaned, before the ruinous delusion which had led to its subjugation was dispelled.

56.

Strong re-
action in
consequence
in Flanders.² Jom. ii.
266.

While these great changes were passing in the north, events of minor importance, but still productive of important consequences, occurred on the southern and eastern frontier. The mountains of Savoy were the theatre of

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1792.

57.
War de-
clared
against
Piedmont.

Sept. 15.

Sept. 15.
1 Botta, i.
75, 88. Jom.
ii. 180.

58.
French
enter Savoy.
Sept. 21.

less sanguinary struggles between the Republican troops and the Italian soldiers. The evident peril of the Piedmontese dominions, from their close proximity to the great centre of revolutionary action, had led, early in 1792, to measures of precaution on the part of the Sardinian government; and all the states of Italy, alarmed at the rapid progress of democratic principles, had made advances towards a league for mutual support. The excitement in Piedmont was so strong, and the contagion of liberal principles so violent, that nothing but war, it soon became evident, could save the kingdom from revolt. Matters were brought to a crisis in September 1792, by the rapid advance of the Imperialists through the Tyrol into the Milanese states. The French despatched an embassy to propose an alliance with the Piedmontese government, promising in that case to guarantee its dominions, repress the turbulence of its subjects, and cede to that power all the conquests made by their joint forces to the south of the Alps. But the peril of any conjunction with the Republican troops, to any established government, was so evident that the King of Sardinia rejected the proposals. The French envoy, in consequence, was not permitted to proceed farther than Alessandria; and the Convention, immediately on receiving intelligence of this decisive step, declared war against the Piedmontese monarch, and orders were despatched to General Montesquieu to assail Savoy, where the Jacobin emissaries had already sown the seeds of disaffection to the Italian dynasty.¹

On the 21st of September the Republicans unexpectedly entered that mountain territory, and, after a feeble resistance, took possession of Chambery and Montmelian, and shortly after overran the whole valleys of the Alps, as far as the foot of Mont Cenis. The Sardinian forces, though nearly ten thousand strong, were so dispersed that it was impossible to unite them in sufficient numbers to oppose any resistance to the sudden attack of the Republicans—another proof, in addition to the many on record,

of the extreme difficulty of defending a range of mountains against a superior and enterprising enemy. Shortly after, operations on a still more extensive scale were undertaken against the country of Nice. On the 1st of October, General Anselme crossed the Var at the head of nine thousand men ; and on the same day the French fleet, consisting of twelve ships of the line and frigates, cast anchor within half cannon-shot of the walls of Nice. Unable to oppose such superior forces, General Courten, who had not two thousand men at his command, and was menaced by an insurgent population within the town, precipitately retreated towards Saorgio and the Col di Tende, leaving the whole coast and valleys, to the foot of the great chain of the Maritime Alps, in the possession of the French. Montalban and Villafranca, the first of which had so gloriously resisted the Prince of Conti in 1744, surrendered at the first summons, and Saorgio became the frontier post of the Piedmontese possessions.¹

CHAP.
X.
1792.

Oct. 1.

¹ Jom. ii.
190, 198.
Ann. Reg.
1793, 74.
Bot. i. 95.

The Republicans made a cruel use of their victory. The inhabitants of Nice and the neighbouring country were rewarded for the friendly reception they had given them by plunder, massacre, and outrages of every description. The mountaineers in the remotest valleys were hunted out, their cattle seized, their houses burned, and their women violated, by those whom they had hailed as deliverers. A proclamation, issued by General Anselme against these excesses, met with no sort of attention ; and the commissioners appointed by the Convention to inquire into the disorders were unable to make any effectual reparation. Shortly after, an expedition was undertaken against the little fortress of Oneglia by the combined land and sea forces ; and, the inhabitants having fired on a boat which approached the batteries with a flag of truce, and killed the officer who bore it, a sanguinary retribution for this violation of the usages of war was taken by the total destruction of the town. Thus, in the space of a few weeks, were the countries of Nice and Savoy torn from

59.
Their rapid
conquests
and cruel
devastation.

Oct. 10.

CHAP.
X.

1792.

the Sardinian crown, though defended by considerable armies, intersected with rugged and impassable mountains, and studded with fortresses once deemed impregnable. The sudden prostration of all these means of defence, before the first attack of the Republicans, gave rise to the most painful reflections : it demonstrated the inefficient state of the Piedmontese troops, once so celebrated ; and gave a sad presage of the probable result of an attack on Italy, when its best defenders had given such disgraceful proofs of pusillanimity. Nor was the general consternation diminished by the appearance of the exiles from France, who soon after arrived in the most lamentable condition at Geneva and Turin—a melancholy example of a sudden transition from the highest rank and prosperity, to the most abject state of misery.¹

¹ Botta, i.
92, 97, 98.
Jom. ii. 200,
205. Ann.
Reg. 1793,
74.

60.
French invade Switzerland, and attack Geneva.

Having thus carried the republican arms to the foot of the great central ridge which separates France from Italy, the Convention proceeded to extend their conquests to the republics of Switzerland. The cantons of that confederacy were much divided in opinion, some having resented with vehemence the massacre of the Swiss Guard on 10th August, and others being tinged by democratic principles, and ready to receive the republican soldiers as deliverers from the predominant power of the aristocracy. The Pays de Vaud, in particular, was in such a state of excitement, that some severe examples had been found necessary by the government of Berne, to which it was subject, to maintain their authority. Paralysed by these intestine divisions, the Helvetic Confederacy had resolved to maintain an armed neutrality ; but the grasping views of the republican conquerors deprived them of such an advantage, and brought them at last into the general field of European warfare. Clavière, minister of foreign affairs in France, and a Genevese by birth, espoused warmly the part of the malcontents in his native city. He was eager to turn his newly acquired power to the ruin of the faction with which he had long contended in

that diminutive republic. He directed Servan, the minister at war, to write to General Montesquiou, "that it would be well to break the fetters which despotism had forged to bind the Genevese, if they were inclined to publish the Rights of Man." That general was extremely unwilling to commence this new aggression, not only because the Diet had given him the strongest assurances of their resolution to maintain a strict neutrality, but because the canton of Berne had assembled a force of nearly ten thousand men to enforce its observation; and it was foreseen that an attack on Geneva would be held as a declaration of war against the whole confederacy. Undeterred by these prudential considerations, the French government commanded Montesquiou immediately to advance; while, on their side, the Swiss sent eighteen hundred men to aid in the defence of the city.¹

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X.
1792.

When the Republicans arrived in the neighbourhood of Geneva, they found the gates closed, the succours arrived, and received a notification from the senate of Berne that they would defend the city to the last extremity. The defenceless state of the frontier towns in the Jura, between France and Switzerland, rendered it highly imprudent to engage in an immediate contest with these warlike mountaineers. In these circumstances negotiation seemed preferable to open violence, and after a short time the French retired from the neighbourhood of Geneva, and General Montesquiou ventured openly to disobey the rash commands of the Convention, who had ordered him to undertake the siege of that city. Two successive conventions were agreed to, in virtue of which the Swiss withdrew their forces from the town, and the French theirs from its vicinity. Geneva was rescued for the moment from the peril of republican invasion, and Montesquiou had the glory of saving his country from the consequences of the rash and unjustifiable aggression which they had commenced. But in other quarters of Savoy, the French revolutionary power was finally estab-

¹ Ann. Reg.
1793, 74, 75.
Jom. ii. 306,
310. Th.
iii. 190, 191.

61.
They fail in
reducing
Geneva, but
revolution-
ise all Savoy,
which is in-
corporated
with France.
Oct. 22.

Nov. 2.

CHAP.
X.

1792.

Nov. 27.

Dec. 7.

¹ Ann. Reg.

1793, 75,

134, 135,

140. Jom.

ii. 311, 313.

Th. iii. 191.

lished. A Jacobin club of twelve hundred members was formed at Chambery, with affiliated societies through all the country, which soon spread the fever of democracy through the whole Maritime Alps, and threatened the institutions of Piedmont with total overthrow. A National Convention, established at Chambery on 21st October, proclaimed the abolition of royalty, tithes, and the privileged orders; and deputations from all the clubs in Savoy were sent to Paris, and received in the most enthusiastic manner by the French legislature. At length, on the 27th November, the whole of Savoy was incorporated with France, under the name of the Department of Mont Blanc; and shortly after, the district of Nice was swallowed up by the encroaching Republic, under the title of the Department of the Maritime Alps, and the state of Monaco also added to its extensive dominions.¹

62.
Operations
on the Upp-
per Rhine.

Amidst these general triumphs of the republican cause, fortune deserted their standards on the Upper Rhine. The French forces in that quarter, which amounted, including the armies of Kellermann, Custine, and Biron, to sixty thousand men, might have struck an important blow against the Duke of Brunswick's army, now severely weakened by the departure of the Austrians under Clair-fait for the defence of the Low Countries. But the movements of these generals, not sufficiently combined with each other, led to nothing but disaster. The plan adopted was for Beurnonville, who had succeeded Kellermann, to take possession of Treves and move upon Coblenz, where he was to effect a junction with Custine, and, with their united forces, press upon the Allies, already threatened by the army of Flanders, and compel them to recross the Rhine. This plan was ably conceived; but its execution entirely failed, owing partly to the difficulty of the enterprise in the beginning of winter, and partly to the want of cordial co-operation among the generals who conducted it. General Larobolière, who was intrusted with the advanced guard of Beurnonville's army, amounting to

three thousand men, destined to attack the city of Treves, was recalled when his journey was half completed, by the apprehensions of his commander-in-chief; while Custine, whose force, by the deduction of the garrison of Mayence, had been reduced to fifteen thousand men, seemed more intent upon pillaging the palaces which fell in his way, and establishing Jacobin clubs in Frankfort and Mayence, than on prosecuting the military movements of the campaign. Meanwhile the Prussians, observing the inactivity of the army of Kellermann, secretly drew their forces round Custine's corps, in the hope that, unsupported as it was, and far in advance, it might be compelled to surrender before any effectual succour should be detached to its support. The design, owing to the supineness of the commander of the French forces, had very nearly succeeded. For long, Custine disregarded the Prussian corps which were gradually drawn round him, and was only awakened from his dream of security upon finding his sole remaining line of retreat threatened by the enemy. He then detached General Houchard with three thousand men, who had an unsuccessful action with the Prussians near Limburg; but shortly after, the arrival of twelve thousand men from the army of the Upper Rhine extricated him from his danger, and put him in a condition to resume offensive operations.¹

Meanwhile the King of Prussia, finding himself at the head of a noble force of fifty thousand men, now in some measure recovered from their disasters, resolved to anticipate the enemy, and drive them from the right bank of the Rhine, in order to give his troops secure cantonments for the winter. With this view he put his army in motion, and, directing the bulk of his forces against Custine's right flank, obliged him to retire to an intrenched camp behind the Nidda, leaving a garrison of two thousand men in Frankfort in a most precarious situation. The King immediately attempted a *coup-de-main* against that city, which completely succeeded—the whole garrison,

CHAP.
X.

1792.

Nov. 15.

Nov. 9.

Nov. 13.

1. Jom. ii.

269, 275,

278, 280.

St Cyr, i. 9.

12. Toul.

iii. 105, 108.

63.

The French
recross the
Rhine.

Dec. 2.

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X.

1792.

¹ Jom. ii.
282, 292.
Toul. iii.
116, 117.
St Cyr, 11,
12, 16.
Hard. ii.
77, 98.

64.
Reflections
on these
events.

² Jom. ii.
192.

³ Jom. ii.
292, 317.
Dum. iii.
230.

with the exception of two hundred men, being either killed or made prisoners. Custine, upon this disaster, after making a feeble attempt to defend the course of the Nidda, repassed the Rhine, and cantoned his troops between Bingen and Frankenthal, leaving a garrison of ten thousand men to defend the important fortress of Mayence. On their side, the Allies also put their troops into winter quarters, of which they stood much in need—the line of their cantonments extending through Frankfurt and Darmstadt, with an advanced guard to observe that frontier city.¹

Thus terminated the campaign of 1792, a period fraught with the most valuable instruction to the statesman and the soldier. Already the desperate and energetic character of the war was made manifest. The contagion of republican principles had gained for France many conquests; but the severity of republican rule had rendered the delusion, in the countries which they had overrun, as short-lived as it was fallacious. In many places their armies had been welcomed, upon their arrival, as deliverers; in none had they been regretted, on their departure, as friends. The campaign, which opened under such untoward auspices, had been marked by the most splendid successes on the part of the Republicans; but it was evident that their conquests had exceeded their strength, and it was remarked that at its close their affairs were declining in every quarter.² In the north, the army of Dumourier, which had just completed the conquest of Flanders, had fallen into the most disorderly state: whole battalions had left their colours, and returned home, or spread themselves as bands of robbers over the conquered territory; the horses and equipments were in wretched condition, and the whole army, weakened by license and insubordination, was fast tending to decay. The armies of Beurnonville and Custine, paralysed by the division and inactivity of their chiefs, were in little better circumstances,³ and their recent failures had gone far to

weaken the energetic spirit which their early successes had aroused ; while the troops who had overrun Savoy and Nice, a prey to their own disorders, were suffering under the consequences of the plunder and devastation which had inflicted such misery on the conquered districts.

But it was evident, from the events which had occurred, that the war was to exceed, in magnitude and importance, any which had preceded it, and that consequences beyond all example momentous were to follow its continuance. The campaign had only commenced in the beginning of August, and before the close of the year, an invasion, the most formidable which had ever threatened the existence of France, had been baffled, and conquests obtained greater than any achieved by its preceding monarchs. Flanders, the theatre of such obstinate contests in the reign of Louis XIV., had been overrun in little more than a fortnight, the Transalpine dominions of the house of Savoy severed from the Sardinian crown, and the great frontier city of Germany wrested from the Empire, almost under the eyes of the Imperial and royal armies. All this had been accomplished, too, under the greatest possible apparent disadvantages. The French armies had taken the field in a state of complete insubordination ; disgrace and discomfiture had attended their first efforts : the kingdom was torn by intestine faction, a large portion of its nobility in the ranks of the invaders, and few of its generals had seen any service, or were in a condition to oppose the experienced tactics of the enemy. But to counterbalance these apparently overwhelming disadvantages, the Republicans possessed elements hitherto unknown in modern warfare—the energy of popular enthusiasm and the vigour of democratic ambition. Experience soon demonstrated that these principles were more powerful than any which had yet been brought into action in human affairs, and that the strength they conferred would be equalled only by the development of passions as strong, and feelings as universal. The French triumphed as long as they con-

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X.

1792.

65.
Great results to which the war was evidently to lead, and causes of the republican success.

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X.

1792.

tended with kings and armies ; they fell, when their tyranny had excited the indignation, and their invasions roused the patriotism of the people. But it was not *immediately* that this formidable opposing power arose ; and political lessons of the utmost moment for the future guidance of mankind, may be gathered from the commencement of this memorable war.

66.
Necessity
of acting
vigorously
against a
revolution
in the out-
set.

1. The first conclusion which presents itself is, the absolute necessity, when attacking a country in a state of revolution, of proceeding vigorously in the outset, and not suffering early success to convert democratic energy into military ambition. These two principles are nearly allied ; the one rapidly passes into the other ; but at first they are totally distinct. After a little success in war, a revolutionary state is the most formidable of all antagonists ; before that has been obtained, it generally may, without much difficulty, be vanquished. No armies could be in a worse state than those of France at the commencement of the campaign of 1792, and the reason was, that the license of a revolution had dissolved the bands of discipline. None could be more formidable than they were at Arcola, because success had then turned political fervour into the career of conquest. In attacking a revolutionary state, the only wise and really economical course is to put forth a powerful force at the outset, and never permit, if possible, a transient success to elevate the spirits of the people. Bitterly did the Austrian and Prussian governments regret the niggardly display of their strength at the commencement of the war. They could easily have then sent forward a hundred thousand men for the invasion of Champagne, while sixty thousand advanced through Alsace, and as many from the Low Countries. Two military monarchies, wielding a united force of above four hundred thousand men, could assuredly have made such an effort for a single campaign. What a multitude of evils would such an early exertion have saved ; the French conscription, the campaign of Moscow, the rout of Leipsic, the blood of millions, the treasures of ages !¹

¹ Jom. i.
375, 386.

2. Even with the forces which they possessed, had the Allies duly improved their advantages at the outset, the Revolution might unquestionably have been vanquished in the first campaign. A little less delay in the advance to the Argonne forest would have prevented the French from occupying, with their inexperienced force, its broken defiles, and compelled them to yield up the capital, or fight in the plains of Champagne, where the numerous cavalry of the Prussians would have proved irresistible : a little more vigour in pressing on the retreating column from Grandpré to Ste. Ménehould would have dispersed the whole defending army, and converted the passion for freedom into that of terror. Fifteen hundred Prussian hussars there routed ten thousand of the best troops of France ; the fate of Europe then hung on a thread : had the Duke of Brunswick fallen on the retiring army with a considerable force, it would have all dissolved, and the reign of the Revolution been at an end. The French military historians all admit this, and ascribe the salvation of France, at this crisis, entirely to the feeble counsels or secret negotiations of the allied army. If a Blücher, a Diebitch, or an Archduke Charles, had been then at the head of the allied armies, with unfettered hands, where would have been the boasted strength of the Revolution ?

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X.

1792.

67.

Ease with
which early
success
might have
been gained.

3. The occupation of the defiles of the Argonne forest by Dumourier has been the subject of the highest panegyric from military writers ; but it brought France to the brink of ruin, by the peril to which his army was exposed in the subsequent retreat to Ste. Ménehould. A very competent authority, Marshal St Cyr, has censured it as a perilous and useless measure, which, by dividing the French force in front of a superior enemy, exposed them to the risk of being beaten and cut to pieces in detail.¹ In truth, the inability of Dumourier to defend the passes of that forest, adds one to the numerous instances on record, of the impossibility of defending a range of broken ground, however strong, against a superior and enterprising enemy. The reason is, that the defending force is

68.

Faults of
Dumourier.¹ St Cyr,
Mém. i. 64,
et seq.

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X.

1792.

necessarily divided to guard the different passes, whereas the attacking may select their point of assault, and, by bringing overwhelming numbers there, compel the abandonment of the whole line. This is just what Napoleon did in the Maritime Alps, Soult in the Pyrenees, and Diebitch in the Balkan. The only example of the successful maintenance of such a position is that of Wellington at Torres Vedras ; but that was not the defence of a range of mountains, so much as a great intrenched camp, adequately guarded by fieldworks at all points. Unquestionably, by keeping his forces together, Dumourier would never have exposed them to the imminent hazard which occurred in the retreat of his detached columns from Grandpré to the camp in the rear—a movement which, if executed in presence of an enterprising enemy, would have proved fatal to France. Had Napoleon been in the Duke of Brunswick's place with so superior a force, he would speedily have penetrated through the other defiles of the Argonne forest, and compelled Dumourier to lay down his arms in his so-called impregnable camp.

69.
Extreme
danger of
France at
the outset
of the Revo-
lution, from
the revolt of
the army.

4. The wretched condition and inglorious exploits of the French armies at the commencement of the war is a striking proof of the extreme peril to national independence, which arises from soldiers taking any part in civil dissensions, and forgetting, for the transient applause of the multitude, the obedience and fidelity which are the first of military virtues. The revolt of the French Guards, the treachery of the army under Louis XVI., brought the national independence to the brink of ruin. The insubordination, the tumults, the relaxation of discipline consequent on such a revolt, dry up the sources of military prowess : till they are removed, the nation has no protection against its enemies. Let not future ages calculate upon again meeting with the genius of Dumourier, the timidity or interested designs of the Duke of Brunswick, or the blind selfishness of the allied counsels. Had matters been reversed—had the French commander headed the

invaders, and the Prussian been intrusted with the defence—where would now have been the name or the independence of France? Internal despotism and foreign subjugation are the inevitable consequences of such breaches of military discipline. France tasted the bitterness of both, in consequence of the applauded revolt of her defenders: the Reign of Terror, the despotism of Napoleon, the capture of Paris, were its legitimate consequences. The French army preserved its honour unsullied, and maintained the virgin purity of the capital through all the perils of the monarchy; it lost both amidst the ultimate consequences of the anarchy which followed the desertion of its duty on the rise of the Republic.

Lastly, from the glorious result of the generous efforts which the French people made to maintain their independence, after revolt had paralysed their regular defenders, the patriots of succeeding times may derive materials for encouragement even in the severest extremities of adverse fortune. No situation could well appear more desperate than that of France after the fall of Longwy; with an insurgent capital and a disunited people; pierced to the heart by an invading army, and destitute alike of experienced commanders and disciplined soldiers. Yet from all these dangers was France delivered by the energy of its government, and the heroism of its inhabitants. From the extremity of peril at Grandpré, how rapid was the transition to security and triumph—to glories greater than those of Francis I.—to conquests more rapid than those of Louis XIV.!—a striking example to succeeding ages of what can be effected by energy and patriotism, and of the rewards which await those who, disregarding the frowns of fortune, steadily adhere through all its vicissitudes to the discharge of duty.

CHAP.

X.

1792.

70.

Glorious
efforts of
France at
this period.

CHAPTER XI.

FRENCH REPUBLIC—FROM THE DEATH OF THE KING TO THE
FALL OF THE GIRONDISTS.—JAN. 21—JUNE 2, 1793.

CHAP.
XI.
1793.
1.
Wonderful
influence of
audacity in
revolutions.

THE death of Louis completed the destruction of the French monarchy. The Revolution had now run the first stage of such convulsions. Springing from philanthropic principles, cherished by patriotic feeling, supported by aristocratic liberality, indulged with royal favour, it had successively ruined all the classes who supported its fortunes. The clergy were the first to join its standard, and they were the first to be destroyed; the nobles then yielded to its fortunes, and they were the next to suffer; the King had proved himself the liberal benefactor of his subjects, and conceded all the demands of the revolutionists. In return he was led to the scaffold. It remained to be seen what was the fate of the victors in the strife—whether such crimes were to go unpunished; and whether the laws of nature promised the same impunity to wickedness which it had obtained from human tribunals. What was the cause of this extraordinary and downward progress? It has been told us alike by the sage and the demagogue. “*Quid in rebus civilibus,*” says Bacon, “*maxime prodest?* Audacia. *Quid secundum?* Audacia. *Quid tertium?* Audacia. In promptu ratio est: inest enim naturæ humanæ plerumque plus stulti quam sapientis; unde et facultates eæ, quibus capitur pars illa in animis mortalium stulta, sunt omnium potentissimæ. Attamen utcumque ignorantiae et sordidi ingenii proles est Audacia, nihilomi-

nus fascinat et captivos ducit eos qui vel judicio infirmiores sunt vel animo timidiore; tales autem sunt hominum pars maxima.”* “Le canon que vous entendez,” said Danton at the bar of the Assembly, on 2d September 1792, when the massacres in the prisons were commencing, “n’est pas le canon d’alarme; c’est le pas de charge sur nos ennemis. Pour les vaincre, pour les atterrer, que faut-il? De l’audace! encore de l’audace! toujours de l’audace!—et la France est sauvée!” It is not a little remarkable, that philosophical sagacity should have inspired to the sage of the sixteenth, not only the idea, but the very words, which a practical acquaintance with the storms of the Revolution suggested to the terrible demagogue of the nineteenth century.¹

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XI.

1793.

¹ Bacon, x.
32. Moni-
teur, Sept.
4, 1792, p.
1057.

Never was the truth of these memorable words more strongly demonstrated than in France during the progress of the Revolution. Rank, influence, talent, patriotism, abandoned the field of combat, or sank in the struggle; daring ambition, reckless audacity, vanquished every opponent. The Girondists maintained that the force of reason, and of the people, was the same thing; and flattered themselves that, by their eloquence, they could curb the Revolution when its excesses became dangerous. They lived to experience their utter inability to contend with popular violence, and sank under the fury of the tempest they had created. The maxim “Vox populi vox Dei” is true only of the calm result of human reflection, when the period of agitation is past, and reason has resumed its sway. So predominant is passion in moments of excitation, that it

² Principle
in human
nature on
which this
is founded.

* “What is the first requisite in civil affairs? Audacity. What is the second? Audacity. What is the third? Audacity. The reason is evident. There is to be found in human nature more of folly than wisdom; from whence those faculties by which the weak part of men’s minds is captivated are the most powerful of all. But as audacity is the offspring of ignorance and a selfish disposition, nevertheless it fascinates those who are either weak in judgment or timid in disposition—that is, the greatest part of men.”—“The cannon which you hear,” said Danton, “is not the cannon of alarm: it is the signal for charging our enemies. To conquer them, to crush them, what is required? Audacity! still audacity! always audacity!—and France is saved!”

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XI.

1793.

too often then happens, that the voice of the people is that of the demons who direct them, and the maxim "*Vox populi vox diaboli*" would often, in reality, be nearer the truth. A horse, maddened by terror, does not rush more certainly on its own destruction than the populace when excited by revolutionary ambition. If the good do not early and manfully combine for their own and their sovereign's defence in the first stages of political troubles, they are sure to be destroyed in the last. But neither do the crimes of the victorious party go in the end unpunished. A certain law of nature provides a slow but certain retribution. To scourge each successive faction which attains the head of affairs, another more hardy than itself arises, until the punishment has reached all the guilty classes, and the nation, in sackcloth and ashes, has expiated its offences.

3.
General
consterna-
tion at the
death of
Louis.

The death of the King roused numbers, when too late, to the dangers of popular rule. Scarcely had his head fallen upon the scaffold when the public grief became visible : the brigands, who were hired to raise cries of triumph, failed in rousing a voice among the spectators. The executioner, after the savage custom of the time, held the bloody head aloft ; but no shouts or cries announced the enthusiasm of the people. The magnitude of the deed appalled every heart. The name of Santerre was universally execrated. " The King was about to appeal to us," said the people, " and we would have delivered him." Many dipped their handkerchiefs in the blood of the victim ; his coat was severed, and delivered to many to preserve ; his hair was religiously gathered, and placed with the relics of saints, by the few who retained religious sentiments. The savage pikemen of the suburbs, seeing this, came forward and plunged their spears in the blood of the sovereign ; some of the national guard did the same with their bayonets and swords : and one ferocious brigand, ascending the scaffold, took up the blood, which in large quantities had flowed from the body, in handfuls, and sprinkled it

over the people, who pressed forward to receive a part of the crimson shower, saying—"Brothers! they have threatened us that the blood of Louis Capet would fall on our heads. Well, LET IT FALL! He has often stained his hands in ours. Republicans, the blood of a king brings happiness."* But these desperate sallies produced little impression: the majority of the people were in consternation; many in the deepest affliction. The furies of the guillotine danced for some hours round the scaffold; but the bulk of the citizens took no part in these horrid orgies. The national guard, silent and depressed, returned to their homes: throwing aside their arms, they gave vent, in the bosom of their families, to feelings which they did not venture to display in public. "Alas! if I had been sure of my comrades!" was the general expression. Fatal effect of civil dissension! to paralyse the good from mutual distrust, and elevate the wicked from conscious audacity.¹

The execution was over at half-past ten; but the shops continued shut, and the streets deserted, during the whole day. Paris resembled a city desolated by an earthquake. Groups of assassins alone were to be seen, singing revolutionary songs, the same as those which had preceded the massacres of September. Their voices, with the discharge of artillery, re-echoed by the silent walls, reached the prison of the Temple, and first informed the royal family of the fate of the sovereign. The Queen, with her orphan

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XI.

1793.

¹ Duval,
Souv. de la
Terreur,
iii. 77, 78.
Lac. x. 256.
Th. iv. 2.
Rév. de
Paris, No.
185. Hist.
Parl. xxii.
324, 325.
Deux Amis,
ix. 371, 372.

4.
Aspect of
Paris after
that event.

* "Quantité de volontaires s'empressèrent aussi de tremper dans le sang du despote le fer de leurs piques, la baïonnette de leurs fusils, ou la lame de leurs sabres. Les gendarmes ne furent pas les derniers. Beaucoup d'officiers du bataillon de Marseille imbibèrent de ce sang impur des enveloppes des lettres qu'ils portèrent à la pointe de leur épée en tête de leur compagnie, en disant, 'Voici du sang d'un tyran!' Un citoyen monta sur la guillotine même, et plongeant tout entier son bras nu dans le sang de Capet, qui s'était amassé en abondance, il en prit des caillots plein la main, et en aspergea trois fois la foule des assistans, qui se pressaient au pied de l'échafaud, pour en recevoir chacun une goutte sur le front. 'Frères,' disait le citoyen en faisant son asperersion—'frères, on nous a menacés que le sang de Louis Capet retomberait sur nos têtes—EH BIEN! QU'IL Y RETOMBE! Louis Capet a lavé tant de fois ses mains dans le nôtre. Républicains, le sang d'un roi porte bonheur.'"—PRUDHOMME, *Révolutions de Paris*, No. 185.

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XI.

1793.

son, fell on her knees, and prayed that they might soon join the martyr in the regions of heaven. She exhorted her children to imitate the virtues and courage of their father, and to make no attempt to avenge his death. She then calmly asked for mourning for herself, her sister, and her children, which was furnished them by the municipality. The shops were closed during the whole day : the women, generally speaking, exhibited a great degree of sensibility, and, in many instances, the most profound grief. An old officer of the order of St Louis died of grief on hearing of the execution ; a bookseller, named Venté, went mad—and a hairdresser in the Rue Sainte Catherine committed suicide. But the extreme revolutionists gave vent to their joy in savage strains of exultation, which would be deemed incredible did not the originals yet exist to attest the general frenzy of the period.¹ *

¹ Prudhom.
Rév. de
Paris, No.
183. Hist.
Parl. xxiii.
322, 325.
Lac. x. 257.

5.
It irrecover-
ably ruined
the Girond-
dist.

The death of the King not only rendered the parties irreconcilable, but weakened the influence of the Girondists with the people. The Jacobins incessantly taunted them with having endeavoured to save the tyrant ; the generous design could not be denied, and constituted an unpardonable offence in the eyes of the democratic party. They accused them of being enemies of the people, because they deprecated their excesses ; accomplices of the tyrant, because they strove to save his life ; traitors to the Republic, because they recommended moderation towards its opponents. Lest the absurdity of these reproaches should become manifest by the return of reason to the public mind, they adopted every means of continuing the popular

* Some idea may be formed of the revolutionary writings with which Paris was then deluged from the following passage, which appeared on this occasion in the *Père Duchesne*, edited by Hébert, a leading person in the municipality of Paris : — " Capet est enfin mort, Foutre ! Je ne dirai pas, comme certains badauds, n'en parlons plus. Parlons-en, au contraire, pour nous rappeler tous ses crimes, et inspirer à tous les hommes l'horreur qu'ils doivent avoir pour les rois. Voilà, Foutre ! ce qui m'engage à entreprendre son oraison funèbre, non pour faire son éloge, ou adoucir ses défauts, mais pour le peindre tel qu'il fut, et apprendre à l'univers si un tel monstre ne méritait pas de être étouffé dans son berceau. Lisez et frémissez, Foutre. . . . Il était d'un mauvais naturel.

agitation. To strike terror into the enemies of the Revolution ; to keep alive the revolutionary fervour by the exhibition of danger, and the fury of insurrections ; to represent the safety of the Republic as solely dependent on their exertions ; to electrify the departments by the aid of affiliated societies—such was the system which they incessantly pursued, till all their enemies were destroyed. The Jacobins, to the last moment, were doubtful of the success of their attack upon the King. The magnitude of the attempt, the enormity of the crime, startled even their sanguinary minds ; and their exultation was proportionally great at their unlooked-for success.¹

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XI.
1793.

The Girondists, on the other hand, grieved for the illustrious victim ; and, alarmed at the appalling success of their adversaries, perceived in the martyrdom of Louis the prelude to long and bloody feuds, of which they themselves would probably be the victims, and the first step in the inexorable system which so soon followed. They had abandoned Louis to his fate, out of terror at the passions of the people, to show that they were not royalists ; but the humiliating weakness, as is ever the case with base deeds, deceived no one in the Republic. All were aware that they did so from necessity, not inclination ; that fear had mastered their resolution ; and that the appeal to the people was an attempt to devolve upon others a danger which they had not the courage to face themselves. They lost in this way the confidence of every party : of the Royalists, because they had been the original authors of the revolt which dethroned the King ; of the Jacobins, because they had

¹ Buzot, 10,
12. Deux
Amis, x. 8,
10. Th. iv.
2, 3.

6.
Retirement
of Roland
from the
Ministry of
the interior.

Avant qu'il pût se baigner dans le sang des hommes, il immolait de ses mains les animaux : il tourmentait les vieillards, les infirmes, les boiteux, les aveugles. Jamais il n'a fait de son propre mouvement une bonne action. Pour mettre la France à deux doigts de sa perte il ne lui fallait qu'une femme aussi atroce que lui-même : une nouvelle Médicis le seconda pour achever de nous détruire. C'est lorsque ce monstre fut roi que son caractère sanguinaire éclata. Pour mieux égorger le peuple, il fit semblant de le soulager. Le hasard lui avait donné un bon ministre : il le chassa aussitôt. Il laissa ensuite ses frères et sa femme déchirer les entrailles du pauvre peuple."—*Lettres b——t Patriotiques du Vêritable Père Duchesne*. No. 212. 24 Jan. 1793.

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XI.

1793.

Jan. 24.

¹ Buzot,
10, 14.
Deux Amis,
x. 8, 9,
Hist. de la
Conv. ii. 153.
Th. iv. ii. 3.

7.
The death
of the King
ultimately
disappoints
all parties.

recoiled from his execution. Roland, completely discouraged, not by personal danger, but by the impossibility of stemming the progress of disaster, which he had done so much to induce, was too happy at the prospect of escaping from his perilous eminence into the tranquillity of private life ; he accordingly resigned his office of minister of the interior. The Girondists exerted themselves to the utmost to prevent him from retiring from his thorny seat in the government, but all their efforts were in vain. Even the influence of his beautiful and gifted wife was unable to retain him at his post. He declared that death would be preferable to the mortifications and vexations he was daily obliged to endure. His party were in despair at his retirement, because they saw clearly the impossibility of supplying his place. They had become sensible of the ruinous tendency of their measures to their country and themselves, when it was no longer possible to retrace their steps.¹

All parties were disappointed in the effect which they had anticipated from the death of the King. The Girondists, whose culpable declamations had roused the spirit which brought him to the block, had imagined that their ascendancy over the populace would be regained by their concurrence in this great sacrifice, and that the multitude would prefer their conservative and moderate counsels to the fierce designs of their dreadful rivals, the Jacobins ; but they were soon undeceived, and found to their cost that this act of iniquity, like all other misdeeds, rendered their situation worse than it had formerly been. The Orleanists lost by this terrible event the little consideration which they still possessed ; and Philippe Egalité, who had flattered himself that, by agreeing to it, he would secure the crown to himself and his descendants, was speedily overwhelmed in the shock of the more energetic and extreme factions who contended for the lead in public affairs. The Jacobins, with more reason, expected

that the destruction of the throne would secure to them a long lease of power. They did not enjoy it for eighteen months. France, overwhelmed by their tyranny, sought refuge from its horror, not in the vacillating hands of a benevolent monarch, but in the stern grasp of a relentless warrior. Such is the march of revolutions. They never recede when their leaders obtain unresisted ascendancy, but are precipitated on, like the career of guilt in an individual, from one excess to another, till the extremity of suffering restores the lead to the classes qualified to take it, and expels the deadly poison of democracy from the social system.¹

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1793.

¹ Hist. de la
Conv. ii.
112, 115,
116.

A temporary union of the contending parties took place, in consequence of the consternation produced by the death of one of the deputies, Lepelletier St Fargeau, who was murdered for voting against the life of the King, by an old member of the Garde-du-Corps, named Paris. This event made a prodigious sensation in Paris, and was taken advantage of by the Jacobins, to give a colour to the alarms they had been continually sounding as to the counter-revolutionary projects which were in agitation. The republican journals, which had viewed with complacency or indifference the massacre of thousands of unresisting victims in the prisons in the beginning of September, were in the utmost consternation when one of the democratic party had fallen beneath the vengeance of a Royalist. Lepelletier's funeral obsequies were celebrated with extraordinary pomp; and such was the sensation excited by the assassination of a single man of their party, that it produced, for a few days, a cessation of party strife, and even an apparent reconciliation of its leaders. Garat was appointed by the Convention minister of the interior, in room of Roland, whom no entreaties could induce to resume his office.² His successor was a man naturally of a benevolent disposition and considerable power of mind, which caused him to be selected for that onerous situation by the party of the

8.
Murder of
Lepelletier
by Paris.² Buzot, 15,
16. Lac,
Pr. Hist. ii.
50. Toul.
iii. 233.
Th. iv. 3.
Deux Amis,
ix. 6, 9.

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XI.

1793.

Gironde to which he belonged, and who still had a majority in the Assembly. But he was alike ignorant of business and of the human heart; and, being destitute of moral courage and political firmness, he was wholly unfit to struggle with the dreadful dangers which soon overwhelmed his party and his country.

9.
War de-
clared
against Eng-
land, Spain-
and Hol-
land.

Feb. 1.

Feb. 19.

1 Decrees
19 and 20
Feb. 1793,
Moniteur.

External events of no ordinary importance occurred at this time, which precipitated the fall of this celebrated party, and accelerated the approach of the Reign of Terror. The first of these was the accession of England to the league of the Allied Sovereigns against the Republic. The execution of the King, as Vergniaud had predicted, at once dissolved the species of neutrality which subsisted between the rival states. Chauvelin, the French ambassador, received orders immediately to leave London; and this was succeeded, in a few days, by a declaration of war by the Convention against England, Spain, and Holland;—against England, as having already virtually declared war by the dismissal of the French ambassador; against Holland, as in reality influenced by England; against Spain, as already a secret enemy. These declarations were followed by an order for the immediate levy of three hundred thousand men. At the same time the national guard was declared to be a permanent force, and all those were decreed *hors la loi*—in other words, liable to instant death—who should oppose the slightest resistance to the conscription, or harbour or conceal any person drawn for the public service, who attempted to desert.¹

10.
Prodigious
effect of
these mea-
sures.

The effect of these measures throughout France was prodigious. “We thank you for having reduced us to the *necessity of conquering*,” was the answer of one of the armies to the Convention in reply to the announcement of the death of the King, and the declaration of war. And, in truth, these sentiments were universal in the military, and general among the people. The feeling of national honour, in all ages so powerful among the

French, was awakened; the dominant party of the Jacobins at Paris no longer appeared in the light of a relentless faction contending for power, but as a band of patriots bravely struggling for national independence. Resistance to their mandates seemed nothing short of treason to the commonwealth in its hour of danger. Every species of requisition was cheerfully furnished under the pressure of impending calamity: in the dread of foreign subjugation, the loss of fortune or employment was forgotten. One only path, that of honour, was open to the brave; one only duty, that of submission, remained to the good; and even the blood which streamed from the scaffold seemed a sacrifice justly due to the offended genius of patriotism, indignant at the defection of some of its votaries.¹

CHAP.
XI.

1793.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxiv. 181,
182. Toul.
iii. 236, 237.
Th. iv. 4, 5.
Lac. ii. 51.
Deux Amis,
ix. 71, 72.

The Royalist, Constitutional, and Moderate parties were never again able to separate the cause of France from that of the Jacobins, who then ruled its destinies. The people, ever led by their feelings, and often incapable of just discrimination,—though more powerfully influenced by generous than selfish sentiments, and, when not swayed by wicked leaders, in the end generally true to the cause of virtue,—constantly associated the adherents of these parties with the enemies of the Republic. They condemned the Royalists, because they fought in the ranks of the Allies, and combated the Republic in La Vendée; the Constitutionalists, because they had entered into negotiations with the enemies of the state, and sought the aid of foreign armies to restore the balance of domestic faction; the Moderates, because they had raised their voices against internal tyranny, and sought to arrest the arm of power in the effusion of human blood. The party which becomes associated in the mind of the people with indifference to the fate of the country in periods of danger, can scarcely ever, during the subsistence of that generation, regain its influence; and opposition to the ruling power, during such a crisis, seldom escapes such an

11.
Their preju-
dicial effect
on the
Royalist and
Constitu-
tional cause.

CHAP.
XI.

1793.

¹ Lac. iii.
237. Mig.
i. 248.

imputation. By a singular coincidence, the Opposition, both in France and England, at this period, lost their hold of the influential part of the nation from the same cause : the French Royalists, because they were accused of coalescing with foreign powers against the integrity of France ; the English Whigs, because they were suspected of indifference to the national glory in the contest with Continental ambition.¹

^{12.}
Plan of the
Jacobins for
resisting the
Allies.

The French leaders were not insensible to the danger arising from the attack of so formidable a coalition of foreign powers as was now prepared to attack them ; but retreat had become impossible. By the execution of Louis, they had come to a final rupture with all established governments. The revolt of the 10th August, the massacres in the prisons, the death of the King, had excited the most profound indignation among all the aristocratic portion of society throughout Europe, and singularly cooled the ardour of the middle ranks in favour of the Revolution. The Jacobins were no longer despised by the European powers, but feared ; and terror prompts more vigorous efforts than contempt. But the republican leaders at Paris did not despair of saving the cause of democracy. The extraordinary movement which agitated France gave them good grounds for hoping that they might succeed in raising the whole male population for its defence, and that thus a much greater body might be brought into the field than the Allies could possibly assemble for its subjugation. The magnitude of the expense was to them a matter of no consequence. The estates of the emigrants afforded a vast and increasing fund, which greatly exceeded the amount of the public debt ; while the unlimited issues of assignats, at whatever rate of discount they might pass, amply provided for all the present or probable wants of the treasury.² Nor did these hopes prove fallacious ; for, such was the misery produced in France by the stoppage of all pacific employment consequent on the Revolution,

² Th. iv. 16.
^{13.} Deux
Amis, x. 72.
73.

and such the terror produced by the Jacobin clubs and democratic municipalities in the interior, that the armies were filled without difficulty, and the republic derived additional external strength from the very intensity of its internal suffering.

But although the armies of the Republic might be supplied by the misery which prevailed in its interior, and the terrors of its government increased by the merciless severity with which the measures taken for filling up its ranks were enforced, yet the great mass of the citizens necessarily remained at home, and it was daily becoming a more difficult matter to provide them with bread, in the midst of bankrupt fortunes, ruined credit, confiscated estates, depreciated assignats, and an insolvent government. The care of this, especially in the capital, where the armed force of the multitude was so great, had long constituted one of the most arduous duties of the Convention. A committee, charged with this matter, with Roland the minister of the interior at its head, had sat daily in Paris during the whole winter; but though they had tried everything that zeal or experience could suggest, nothing had been found capable of arresting the public distress. The universal suffering did not arise from scarcity or natural causes; the weather had been fine, the season propitious, the harvest good. It was entirely the result of the destruction of fortunes and ruin of credit which had arisen from the Revolution, and the prodigious issue of assignats, bearing a forced circulation, which had been made to sustain its fortunes.¹

Dread of pillage, repugnance on the part of the cultivators to sell their produce for payment in the depreciated currency, which necessarily resulted from the unlimited issue of assignats, rendered abortive all the efforts of government to supply the public necessities. At the same time, the price of every article of consumption increased so immensely, as to excite the most vehement clamours among the people. The price, not only of bread,

CHAP.
XI.

1793.

13.
Great distress in
Paris and
over France.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxii. 163,
187. Deux
Amis, ix.
81, 82. Th.
iv. 39, 41.

14.
Popular
demands for
a maximum.

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XI.

1793.

but of sugar, coffee, candles, and soap, had more than doubled since the Revolution commenced. Innumerable petitions on this subject succeeded each other at the bar of the Convention. The more violent of the Jacobins had a remedy ready ; it was to proclaim a maximum for the price of every article, lay a forced tax on the rich, and hang all persons who sold at a higher price than that fixed by law. In vain Thuriot, and a few of the more educated of the party, raised their voices against these extreme measures ; they were assailed with cries against the "*shopkeeper aristocracy* ;" their voices were drowned by hisses from the galleries ; and the Mountain itself found that resisting such proceedings would speedily render them as unpopular as the Girondists had already become. The people now declared that the leaders they had selected were as bad as the old nobles. Perhaps the greatest and most ruinous delusion in such convulsions, is the common opinion, that, by selecting their rulers from their own body, the labouring classes will find them more inclined to sympathise with their distresses than if taken from a more elevated class—a natural but pernicious opinion, which all history proves to be fallacious, and which the common proverb, as to the effect of setting a beggar on horseback, shows to be adverse to the experience, in ordinary times, of mankind.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, x. 18,
21. Th. iv.
39, 41. Hist.
de la Conv.
ii. 164.

15.
Tumult in
Paris from
the high
prices.
Feb. 24.

At length the extreme difficulty of procuring subsistence roused the people to a perfect fury. A tumultuous mob surrounded the hall of the Jacobins, and treated that body as they had so often treated the legislature. The object was to procure a petition from them to the Convention, to affix a maximum on the price of provisions. The demand was refused. Instantly, cries of "Down with the forestallers! down with the rich!" resounded on all sides ; and the Jacobins were threatened as they had threatened the Convention. Marat, the following morning, published a number of his journal, in which, raising his powerful voice against what he called "the

monopolists, the merchants of luxury, the supporters of fraud, the ex-nobles," he added — "In every country where the rights of the people are not a vain title, the pillage of a few shops, at the door of which they hang their forestalling owners, would put an end to an evil which reduces five millions of men to despair, and daily causes thousands to die of famine. When will the deputies of the people learn to act, without eternally haranguing on evils they know not how to remedy?"¹ *

Encouraged by these exhortations, the populace were not slow in taking the redress of their wrongs into their own hands. A mob assembled, and pillaged a number of shops in the streets of La Vieille-Monnaie, Cinq-Diamans, and Lombards. They next insisted that every article of commerce should be sold at half its present price, and large quantities were seized in that manner at a ruinous loss to the owners. Speedily, however, they became tired of paying at all, and the shops were openly pillaged, without any equivalent being given.²

CHAP.
XI.

1793.

¹ Journal de
la République, 25th
Feb.² Th. iv. 43,
46. Deux
Amis, x. 20,
21.

All the public bodies were filled with consternation at these disorders. The shopkeepers, in particular, whose efforts in favour of the Revolution had been so decided at its commencement, were in despair at the approach of anarchy to their own doors. The Girondists, who were for the most part the representatives of the commercial cities of France, were fully alive to the disastrous effects of a maximum in prices. But when they attempted to enforce their principles, they were universally assailed by the populace, and their efforts in this particular destroyed

16.
Universal
consterna-
tion in Paris.
Feb. 26.

* "En attendant que la nation, fatiguée de ces désordres révoltans, prenne elle-même le parti de purger la terre de la liberté de cette race criminelle que ses lâches mandataires encouragent au crime par l'impunité, on ne doit pas trouver étrange que le peuple dans chaque ville, poussé au désespoir, se fasse lui-même justice. Dans tout pays où les droits du peuple ne sont pas des vains titres consignés fastueusement dans un temple, le pillage de quelques magasins, à la porte desquels on pendrait les accapareurs, mettrait bientôt fin à ces malversations, qui réduisent cinq millions d'hommes au désespoir, et qui font périr des milliers de misère. Les députés du peuple ne sauront-ils donc jamais que bavarder sur des maux, sans en présenter jamais le remède?" — MARAT, *Journal de la République*, No. 133.

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XI.

1793.

all the little consideration which still remained to them. The pillage began at seven in the morning, and continued without intermission for twelve hours, before the municipality elected by universal suffrage, who in secret favoured the agitation, made even a show of attempting to put it down. The consternation, in consequence, was unprecedented; for on the one hand the populace loudly clamoured for a maximum of prices, and the shopkeepers, as loudly, vociferated against the pillage, which was becoming universal. All attempts to calm the people were vain; even the Jacobins were wholly unsuccessful in their exertions in this respect. The suffering was real and felt by all. Nothing could make the multitude see it was owing to the measures of the Revolution. They unanimously ascribed it to the arts of its opponents. The attempts of the authorities to restore order, or pass coercive regulations, were drowned in the cries of the mob, and the hisses of the galleries; every new act of violence which was recounted was received with shouts of applause. Neither at the Convention, nor the Hotel de Ville, nor the Jacobins, could any remedy be devised for allaying the fury of the people. Robespierre, St Just, Chaumette, were hooted down the moment they attempted to speak against the prevailing passion. The Royalists contrasted these deplorable scenes with the tranquillity enjoyed under the monarchy. "Behold," said the Girondists, "to what we are fast driving under the system of popular violence."—"It is all," said the Jacobins, "the work of Royalists, Rolandists, Girondists, and partisans of Lafayette, in disguise." Robespierre maintained in the evening, at the Jacobins, the popular doctrine "that the people could do no wrong," and that the Royalists were the secret instigators of all the disorders.¹

¹ Journal des Jacobins, No. 362. Prud'hom. R  v. de Paris, No. 191, 440. Th. iv. 47, 48. Hist. de la Conv. ii. 163. Deux Amis, x. 20, 21.

17.
Debates at the Jacobins on this subject.

The debates in the Jacobin club on this occasion are highly interesting, as indicating clearly the existence of that division in the revolutionary party between the shopkeepers and the workmen—the holders of some property

and the holders of none—which sooner or later must arise in all such convulsions, and which revealed the secret ultimate designs of Robespierre and his extreme followers. “The movements which have taken place,” said Marat, “are owing to a perfectly natural cause : it is the excessively high price of provisions. These movements have been secretly instigated by the counter revolutionists, who wish to restore Roland, the god of their idolatry, to the ministry of the interior. The scarcity of bread is to be ascribed to an entirely different cause : it is owing to a combination among the bakers. This abuse has grown up from the malversations and inefficiency of the Committee of Subsistence, which has not yet rendered an account of its intromissions.”¹

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XI.
1793.

Robespierre immediately rose. “As I have ever loved humanity, and never flattered a human being, I will dare to tell the truth. I have ever maintained, often when I stood alone and was the object of persecution for it—*that the people are never wrong*. I ventured to proclaim this at a time when it was not generally recognised : the course of the Revolution has now clearly demonstrated its truth. The people have so often heard the authority of the law invoked by those who wished to maintain it only to oppress them, that they are become suspicious of that language. The people suffer ; they have not yet received the fruit of their labours ; they are persecuted by the rich, and the rich are what they always were—hard and pitiless. The people see the insolence of those who have betrayed them ; they see fortunes accumulating in their hands ; they feel their own misery, and thence the disorders. What do the agitators do who are at the head of the tumults ? They declaim not against the rich—not against the monopolisers—not against the counter revolutionists ; but against the Jacobins—against the Mountain—against the true patriots. I maintain, then, the people have never been wrong ; the pillage has been the work of the aristocracy ; the sugar loaves have been

¹ Journal
des Jaco-
bins, 27th
Feb. No.
362.

18.
Remarkable
speech of
Robespierre
there.

CHAP.
XI.

1793.

¹ Journal
des Jaco-
bins, 28th
Feb. No.
363.19.
Indecision
of all parties
in Paris.

received by their valets. Our adversaries have done this : they wish to persuade us that the system of liberty and equality leads to such disorders. For myself, I praise the insurrection : I only lament it was directed to an unworthy object. The people should rise, not to plunder sugar, but to destroy their oppressors—to exterminate the factions in power, who, after the 10th August, had agreed to surrender Paris to the Prussians.”¹

The alarm in the capital soon became extreme : all the public bodies declared their sittings permanent ; the *générale* everywhere called the armed sections to their posts, and the people openly talked of the necessity of a new insurrection to “ lop off the gangrened parts of the national representation.” The Girondists, who were likely first to suffer, assembled, armed, at the house of Valazé, one of their number, where indecision and distraction of opinion paralysed all their counsels. The Jacobins were hardly less embarrassed than themselves. Robespierre himself, whose moral courage nothing in general could daunt, was in the greatest possible alarm, and vehemently urged the immediate return of St Just from the army of the north, to make head against the danger.* It was at first proposed to march direct with the armed force of the sections upon the National Assembly, and put to death a hundred of the most obnoxious deputies, including the whole members of the Gironde. It was suggested, however, that this stroke might fail, and the Revolutionary Tribunal was not yet sufficiently efficient to effect the great work of the rapid extermination of the counter revolutionists. These doubts prevailed. Though supported by the municipality, the majority of the sections or national guard, and the armed multitude,² they did not

² Deux
Amis, x. 21,
22. Th. iv.
50, 55.

* “ La liberté est exposée à de nouveaux dangers—les factions se réveillant avec un caractère plus alarmant que jamais. Les rassemblemens pour le beurre sont plus nombreux et plus turbulens que jamais, lorsqu'ils ont le moins de prétextes—une insurrection dans les prisons, qui devait éclater hier. Les restes des factions, ou plutôt les factions toujours vivantes, redoublent d'audace et de perfidie.”—ROBESPIERRE à ST JUST, 6 *Prairial*, Ann. 2; *Papiers Inédits*, ii. 5. 6.

conceive the public mind yet ripe for a direct attack on the national representatives, where the Girondists still held the important offices. They resolved, therefore, to limit their demands to minor points, preparatory to the grand attack which was to overthrow their adversaries.

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1793.

An event occurred at this time, which consolidated the influence of the Jacobins in the metropolis, and tended powerfully to accelerate the march of the Revolution. This was the unsuccessful attempt of Dumourier to restore the constitutional throne. That celebrated general, who was warmly attached to the principles of the Girondists, had long been dissatisfied with the sanguinary proceedings, and still more sanguinary declarations, of the democratic leaders, and saw no safety for France but in the re-establishment of the constitution of 1791. He left the command of his army, and came to Paris, in order to endeavour to save the life of Louis; and when that project failed returned to Flanders, and entered into negotiations with the United Provinces and Great Britain. His design was to make an irruption into Holland, overturn the revolutionary authorities in that country; to form a new government in the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands, and raise an army of eighty thousand men; to offer the alliance of this state to the French government, on condition of their restoring the constitution of 1791; and in case of refusal, to march to Paris with his own forces, and those of the Belgians, and overturn the Convention and the rule of the Jacobins.¹

20.
Designs of
Dumourier.

¹ Dum. iii.
378, 400.
Toul. iii.
256, 260.
Mign. i.
249, 250.
Roland, i.
217.

Full of this extraordinary project, Dumourier, at the head of fifteen thousand men, threw himself into the Dutch territory. He was at first successful, and succeeded in obtaining possession of Breda and Gertruydenberg; but while prosecuting his career, intelligence was received of the rout of the French corps besieging Maestricht, and orders were given for the immediate return of the victorious army to cover the frontiers. So great was the consternation which immediately ensued among the Repub-

21.
His irrup-
tion into
Holland in
pursuance
of it.

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1793.

lican troops that whole battalions disbanded themselves, and some of the fugitives fled as far as Paris, spreading the most exaggerated reports wherever they went. In obedience to the orders he had received, Dumourier returned to Flanders, and fought a general action with Prince Cobourg ; but the Allies were successful, and the victory of Nerwinde compelled the French to abandon all their conquests in Flanders. These events, the details of which will be given in a subsequent chapter, occasioned an immediate rupture between this general and the Jacobins. Danton was immediately despatched from Paris to Flanders, to watch over and report on his proceedings. Shortly after the battle, Dumourier wrote a letter to the Convention, in which he drew too faithful a picture of their government, accusing them of all the anarchy and disorders which had prevailed, and declaring them responsible for the safety of their more moderate colleagues. This letter was suppressed by the government ; but it was circulated in Paris, and produced the greatest sensation. Danton returned to the capital from the army, and openly denounced the " Traitor Dumourier " at the club of the Jacobins : his head was loudly called for as a sacrifice to national justice ; and the agitation occasioned by the public disasters incessantly kept alive by the circulation of the most gloomy reports.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, x.
230, 233.
Toul. iii.
293. Lac.
ii. 53, 56.
Mig. i. 250,
251. Th. iv.
112, 113.

22.
Dumou-
rier's de-
signs against
the Repub-
lic.

Impelled by the imminent danger of his own situation ; dissatisfied with the measures of the Convention, who had both thwarted his political wishes, and withered his military laurels ; chagrined at the conduct of the government towards the Belgians, who had capitulated on the faith of his assurances, and had subsequently been cruelly treated by their conquerors, Dumourier entered into a correspondence with the allied generals. In the prosecution of this design, he neither acted with the vigour nor the caution requisite to insure success. To his officers he openly spoke of marching to Paris, as he had recently before spoken of marching to Brussels ; while the soldiers were

left to the seductions of the Jacobins, who found in them the willing instruments of their ambitious designs. Dumourier, as he himself admits, had not the qualities requisite for the leader of a party ; but, even if he had possessed the energy of Danton, the firmness of Bouillé, or the ambition of Napoleon, the current of the Revolution was then too strong to be arrested by any single arm. Like Lafayette and Pichegru, he was destined to experience the truth of the saying of Tacitus,—“*Bellis civilibus plus militibus quam ducibus licere.*”*

His power, great while wielding the force of the democracy, crumbled when applied to coerce its fury ; and the leader of fifty thousand men speedily found himself deserted and proscribed in the midst of the troops whom he had recently commanded with despotic authority.¹

The first intimation which the Convention received of his designs, was from the general himself. Three determined Jacobins, Proly, Pereira, and Dubuisson, had been sent to headquarters to obtain authentic accounts of his intentions. In a long and animated discussion with them, he openly avowed his views, and threatened the Convention with the vengeance of his army. “No peace,” he exclaimed, “can be made for France, if we do not destroy the Convention ; as long as I have a sword to wield, I shall strive to overturn its rule, and the sanguinary tribunal which it has recently created. The Republic is a mere chimera ; I was only deceived by it for three days ; we must save our country, by re-establishing the throne, and the constitution of 1791. Ever since the battle of Jemappes, I have never ceased to regret the triumphs obtained in so bad a cause. What signifies it whether the king is named Louis, James, or Philip ? If the lives of the prisoners in the Temple are endangered, France will still find a sovereign, and I shall instantly march to Paris to avenge their death.”² To the imprudence of this

CHAP.
XI.

1793.

¹ Lac. ii.
256, and 56.
Toul. ii. 294,
306. Mig. i.
258. Deux
Amis, x.
232, 234.

23.
His extreme
imprudence.

² Deux
Amis, x.
223, 224.
Dum. Mém.
iv. 125, 130.
Mig. i. 256.
Lac. ii. 57.

* “In civil war the soldiers have more power than the generals.”—TACITUS, *Hist.* ii. 44.

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XI.

1793.

premature declaration, Dumourier, with that mixture of warmth and facility which distinguished his character, added the still greater fault of letting the commissioners, thus possessed of his intentions, depart for Paris, where they lost no time in informing the Convention of the danger which threatened them.

24.
Dumourier
arrests the
commission-
ers of the
Convention.
April 2.

Instant measures were taken to counteract the designs of so formidable an opponent. Proceeding with the decision and rapidity which in civil dissensions are indispensable to success, they summoned him to appear at their bar, and, on his failure to obey, despatched four commissioners, with instructions to bring him before them, or arrest him in the middle of his army. Dumourier received these representatives in the midst of his staff; they read to him the decree of the Assembly, commanding his instant attendance at their bar: he refused to comply, alleging, as an excuse, the important duties with which he was intrusted, and promising to render an account of his proceedings at some future time. The representatives urged, as a reason for his submission, the example of the Roman generals. "We deceive ourselves," replied he, "in alleging as an apology for our crimes the virtues of the ancients. The Romans did not murder Tarquin; they established a republic, governed by wise laws; they had neither a Jacobin Club nor a Revolutionary Tribunal. We live in the days of anarchy; tigers demand my head; I will not give it them." "Citizen-General," said Carnier, the leading representative, "will you obey the decree of the Convention, and repair to Paris?"—"Not at present," replied Dumourier.—"I declare you then suspended from your functions, and order the soldiers to arrest your person."—"This is too much!" exclaimed the general; and calling in his hussars, he arrested the representatives of the Convention, and delivered them as hostages to the Austrian general.¹

¹ Dum.
Mém. iv.
156, 159.
Deux Amis,
x. 225, 226.
Lac. ii. 57.
Mig. i. 257.
258. Toul.
iii. 311, 312.
Th. 118, 119.

The die being now cast, Dumourier prepared to follow up his design of establishing a constitutional monarchy. Public opinion in his army was strongly divided: the

corps attached to his person were ready to go all lengths in his support ; those of an opposite tendency regarded him as a traitor ; the majority, as in all civil convulsions, were indifferent, and ready to side with the victorious party. But the general wanted the firm hand requisite to guide a revolutionary movement, and the feelings of the most energetic of his soldiers were hostile to his designs. He set out for Condé, with the intention of delivering it to the Austrians, according to agreement, as a pledge of his sincerity ; but having encountered a body of troops, headed by a young officer destined to future celebrity, DAVOUST, adverse to his designs, who opposed his progress, he was compelled to take to flight, and only escaped by abandoning his horse, which refused to leap a ditch. With heroic courage he endeavoured, the following day, with an escort of Austrian hussars, attended by a few faithful officers, among whom were the daughters of M. Fernig, in uniform and male attire, to regain his camp ; but the sight of the foreign uniforms roused the patriotic feelings of the French soldiers ; the artillery first abandoned his cause, and, soon after, their example was followed by the whole infantry. Dumourier with difficulty regained the Austrian lines, where fifteen hundred followers only joined his standard. The remainder of the army collected in an intrenched camp at Famars, where, shortly after, General Dampierre, by authority of the Convention, assumed the command.¹

The failure of this, as of every other conspiracy, added to the strength of the ruling party in the French capital. Terror, often greatest when the danger is past, prepared the people to take the most desperate measures for the public safety ; the defection of Dumourier to the Austrians gave the violent revolutionists the immense advantage of representing their adversaries as, in reality, enemies to the cause of France. During the first fervour of the alarm, the Jacobins denounced their old enemies, the Girondists, as the authors of all the public calamities, and actually fixed the 10th March for a general attack upon

CHAP.
XI.

1793.

25.
His failure
and flight.

¹ Dum. iv.
162, 170.
Toul. iii.
313, 316,
320. Mig.
i. 258. Lac.
ii. 61, 62.
Th. 120, 126.
Biog. Univ.
(Davoust.)
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. vi.
347.

26.
Contests
between the
Girondists
and Jaco-
bins.
March 10.

CHAP.
XI.

1793.

the leaders of that party in the bosom of the legislature. The Convention had declared its sittings permanent, on account of the public dangers ; and on the evening of the 9th it was determined at the secret committees, the club of the Jacobins, and the Cordeliers, on the following day, to close the barriers, to sound the tocsin, and march in two columns with the forces of the faubourgs upon the Convention. The agitation was unparalleled at the former great centre of insurrection. Night and day they sat debating in their vast and gloomy hall ; but such was the vehemence of the members, and the burst of indignation against Dumourier, that scarce any orator could be heard at the tribune, and the debates exhibit only a series of passionate exclamations and vehement interruptions. At the appointed hour, the leaders of the insurrection repaired to their posts ; but the Girondists, informed of their danger, abstained from joining the Convention at the dangerous period ; the sections and national guard hesitated to join the insurgents ; Beurnonville, minister of war, marched against the faubourgs at the head of a faithful battalion of troops from Brest, and a heavy rain cooled the revolutionary ardour of the multitude. Pétion, looking at the watery sky, exclaimed—" It will come to nothing ; there will be no insurrection to-night." The plot failed, and its failure postponed, for a few weeks, the commencement of the Reign of Terror. By such slender means was it possible, at that period, to have arrested the disorders of the Revolution ; and on such casual incidents did the most momentous changes depend.¹

The conspirators, astonished at the absence of the Girondists from the Convention during the critical period, broke out into the loudest invectives against them for their defection. " They were constantly at their posts," they exclaimed, " when the object was to save Louis Capet, but they hid themselves when the country was at stake." On the following day, all Paris resounded with the failure of the conspiracy ; and Vergniaud, taking

¹ Journ. des Jacobins, 9th to 13th March, Mig. i. 251. Lac. ii. 62, 65. Th. iv. 76. Deux Amis, x. 23, 24.

27.
Abortive
conspiracy
of the Ja-
cobins.
March 13.

advantage of the general consternation, denounced in the Convention the Committee of Insurrection which had supported the intended massacre, and moved that the papers of the club should be seized, and the members of the committee arrested. "We march," he exclaimed, "from crimes to amnesties, and from amnesties to crimes. The great body of citizens are so blinded by their frequent occurrence, that they confound these seditious disturbances with the grand national movement in favour of freedom, regard the violence of brigands as the efforts of energetic minds, and consider robbery itself as indispensable for public safety. You are free, say they ; but unless you think like us, we will denounce you as victims to the vengeance of the people. You are free ; but unless you bow before the idol which we worship, we will deliver you up to their violence. You are free ; but unless you join with us in persecuting those whose probity or talents we dread, we will abandon you to their fury. Citizens, there is too much reason to dread, *that the Revolution, like Saturn, will successively devour all its progeny, and finally leave only despotism, with all the calamities which it produces.*"* These prophetic words produced some impression ; but, as usual, the Convention did nothing adequate to arrest the evils which it anticipated. Some of the conspirators were apprehended on charges of sedition ; but their trials led to no result unfavourable to the violence of democracy.¹

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XI.
1793.

Danton and the Jacobins made an immediate use of the agitation produced by these events, to urge the establishment of a REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNAL, "in order to defend from internal enemies the relations of those who were combating foreign aggression on the frontiers." The former tribunal established under this name had been suppressed, as too dilatory in its proceedings, after

¹ Moniteur,
March 10.
Mig. i. 252.
Th. iv. 78,
Lac. ii. 64.
Hist. Parl.
xxv. 86, 88.

28.
Proposal for
the 'Revolutionary Tri-
bunal.'
March 9.

* "Bella per Emathios plusquam civilia campos,
Jusque datum secleri, canimus, populumque potentem
In sua victrici conversum viscera dextra."

LUCAN, *Pharsalia*, i. 1.

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the massacres of September ; but the vehement passions now abroad gave the Jacobins the entire command of the Convention. This tribunal, as proposed to be re-established, differed in one important particular from the former. The judges and public officers were to be nominated, not by the sections of Paris, but by the Executive Council, and the juries by the Convention. Thus the court was nothing but an engine of awful power put into the hands of the Executive Council of government, resting on the majority of the Convention, to exterminate their opponents. It was empowered to take cognisance of every anti-revolutionary enterprise, every attempt against liberty, equality, the unity or indivisibility of the Republic, the internal or external security of the state, and of all conspiracies tending to re-establish royalty, or any authority derogatory to freedom, equality, or the sovereignty of the people, whether the accused were civil or military functionaries or simple citizens. The judgments of the court were final, and to be instantly executed, and the whole estates, heritable and movable, of those condemned to death, were to be confiscated to the public treasury.¹

¹ Decree,
March 9,
Moniteur,
March 10.
Hist. Parl.
xxv. 54, 60.

29.

Vehement
debate on
this project
in the As-
sembly.
March 16.

Agitation, as usual, was resorted to, to insure the success of this sanguinary project. A repast was provided for the people at the Halle-au-Blé ; and the galleries of the Convention were filled with the partisans of the Jacobins, heated with wine, and prepared to applaud every extravagance of their leaders. Lindet read the *projet* of the law for the regulation of the new tribunal. It bore that it should be “composed of nine members appointed by the Convention, liberated from all legal forms, authorised to convict on any evidence, divided into two permanent divisions, and entitled to prosecute either on the requisition of the Convention, or of their own authority, all those who either by their opinions misled the people, or, by the situations they occupied under the old regime, recalled the usurped privileges of despots.” When this appalling *projet* was read, the most violent

murmurs broke out on the right, which were speedily drowned in the loud applause of the galleries and the left. "I would rather die," exclaimed Vergniaud, "than consent to the establishment of a tribunal worse than the Venetian Inquisition."—"Take your choice," answered Amar, "between such a measure and an insurrection."—"My inclination for revolutionary power," said Cambon, "is sufficiently known; but if the people may be deceived in their elections, are not we equally likely to be mistaken in the choice we make of the judges? and if so, what insupportable tyrants shall we then have created for ourselves!" The tumult became frightful; the evening approached; the Convention, worn out with exertion, was yielding to violence—the members of the Plain were beginning to retire, and the Jacobins loudly calling for a decision by open vote, when Féraud exclaimed, "Yes! let us give our votes publicly, in order that we may make known to the world the men who would assassinate innocence under cover of the law." This bold apostrophe recalled the yielding centre to their post; and, contrary to all expectation, it was resolved that the trials should take place by jury; that the jurors should be chosen from the departments; and that they should be named by the Convention.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xxv. 51, 53.
Moniteur,
March 11.
Th. iv. 71,
72.

After this unexpected success, the Girondists proposed that the Convention should adjourn for an hour; but Danton, who was fearful lest the influence of terror and agitation should subside even in that short interval, raised his powerful voice. "I summon," said he, in a voice of thunder, "all good citizens to their places." The members who had risen instantly sat down. "What, citizens!" he continued, "can you separate without having adopted the measures requisite for the safety of the Republic? I feel how indispensable it is to adopt such measures as may *strike terror* into the counter revolutionists; for it is they who have rendered a revolutionary tribunal necessary. It is for their interest that it should exist, for it

30.
The Revo-
lutionary
Tribunal is
established.
March 10.

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will supersede the last appeal to the vengeance of the people. Snatch them yourselves from public indignation ; humanity demands, policy counsels it. Nothing is more difficult than to define a political crime ; but is it not indispensable that extraordinary laws, beyond the pale of social institutions, should overawe the wicked, and for ever crush the efforts of the rebels ? The public safety requires great measures and terrible instruments. I see no medium between ordinary forms and a revolutionary tribunal. We must instantly complete the formation of these laws, destined to strike terror into the internal enemies of the Revolution. They must be arbitrary, because they cannot be precise ; because, how terrible soever they may be, they are preferable to those popular executions which now, as in September, would be the consequence of any delay in the execution of justice. After having established this tribunal, we must organise an energetic executive power, which may be in immediate contact with you, and put at your disposal all your resources in men and money. Let us profit by the errors of our predecessors, and do that which the Legislative Assembly has not ventured to do. There is no medium between ordinary forms and a revolutionary tribunal. Let us be terrible, to prevent the people from becoming so ; let us organise a tribunal, not which shall do good—that is impossible ; but which shall do the least evil that is possible, to the effect that the sword of the law may descend upon all its enemies. To-day, then, let us complete the revolutionary tribunal, to-morrow the executive power, and the day after, the departure of our commissioners for the departments. Calumniate me if you will, but let my memory perish, provided the Republic is saved.” “ I demand the *appel nominal*,” cried Vergniaud, “ that we may know who are the men who continually make use of the name of liberty to destroy it.” But it was all in vain.¹ The Convention, overwhelmed by terror, passed the decree as proposed by Lindet, investing the

¹ Lac. ii. 202. Hist. de la Conv. ii. 209, 210. Hist. Parl. xxv. 54, 59. Lam. Hist. des Gir. v. 343.

new tribunal with the despotic powers which were afterwards exercised with such ruinous effect on many of its own members.*

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Fouquier Tinville was the public accuser in the Revolutionary Tribunal; and his name soon became as terrible as that of Robespierre to all France. He was born in Picardy, and exhibited a combination of qualities so extraordinary that, if it had not been established by undoubted testimony, it would have been deemed fabulous. Sombre, cruel, suspicious, the implacable enemy of merit or virtue of any kind, ever ready to aggravate the sufferings of innocence, he appeared insensible to every sentiment of compassion or equity. Justice in his eyes consisted in condemning; an acquittal was the source of profound vexation: he was never happy unless he had secured the conviction of all the accused. He exhibited in the pursuit of this object an extraordinary degree of ardour. He seemed to consider his personal credit as involved in the decision on their guilt; their firmness and calm demeanour in presence of their judges inspired him with transports of rage. But with all this hatred for all that is most esteemed among men, he showed himself equally insensible to the attractions of fortune, or the sweetness of domestic life. He required no species of recreation: women, the pleasures of the table, of the theatre, were alike indifferent to him. Sober and sparing

31.
Character of
Fouquier
Tinville, its
public ac-
cuser.

* The decree of the Convention was in these terms:—"There shall be established at Paris an Extraordinary Criminal Revolutionary Tribunal. It shall take cognisance of every attempt against liberty, equality, the unity or indivisibility of the Republic, the internal or external security of the state, of all conspiracies tending to the re-establishment of royalty, or hostile to the sovereignty of the people, whether the accused are public functionaries, civil or military, or private individuals. The members of the jury shall be chosen by the Convention; the judges, the public accuser, the two substitutes, shall be named by it; the tribunal shall decide on the opinion of the majority of the jury; the decision of the Court shall be without appeal, and the effects of the condemned shall be confiscated to the Republic." The Girondists laboured hard to introduce the clause allowing the members of the Convention to be tried in that court, with a view to the trial of Marat before it; the same clause was afterwards made the means of conducting almost all of themselves to the scaffold.—See *Hist. de la Conv.* ii. 209, 210; and *Moniteur*, March 11, 1793.

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in diet, he never indulged in any bacchanalian excess, excepting when with the Judges of the Revolutionary Tribunal he celebrated what they termed a *feu de file*—that was, a sitting at which all the accused were condemned : he then gave way to intemperance. His power of undergoing fatigue was unbounded : he was seldom to be seen at the clubs or any public meeting : the Revolutionary Tribunal was the theatre of all his exertions. The sole recreation which he allowed himself was to behold his victims perish on the scaffold : he confessed that that spectacle had great attractions. He might, during the period of his power, have amassed an immense fortune : he remained to the last poor ; and his wife is said to have died of famine. His lodgings were destitute of every comfort ; their whole furniture after his death did not sell for twenty pounds. No seduction could influence him ; he was literally inaccessible to all the ordinary desires of men. Nothing roused his mind but the prospect of inflicting death, and then his animation was such that his countenance became radiant and expressive.¹

¹ Hist. de la
Conv. ii.
215, 217.

32.
War in La
Vendée
breaks out,
March 10.

The Jacobins were for a moment disconcerted by the failure of their conspiracy : but the war in La Vendée, which broke out about this period, and rapidly made the most alarming progress, soon reinvested them with their former ascendancy over the populace. The peculiar circumstances of this district, its simple manners, patriarchal habits, remote situation, and resident proprietors, rendered it the natural centre of the royalist spirit, which the execution of Louis had roused to the highest degree throughout all France. The nobles and clergy not having emigrated from its provinces, were there in sufficient force to counterbalance the influence of the towns, and raise the standard of revolt. The two most powerful passions of the human mind, religious fervour and popular ambition, were rapidly brought into collision ;² a war of extermination was the result, and a million of Frenchmen perished in the strife of the factions

² Hist. Parl.
xxv. 190,
191. Lac.
ii. 63, 64.
Mig. i. 252,
253.

contending for dominion. But the details of this war, so glorious in its character, so interesting in its details, so heart-rending in its result, require a separate chapter ; all that is necessary here is to notice it, as materially augmenting the general agitation, and adding to the strength which the Jacobin faction derived from its continuance.

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Assailed by so many foreign and domestic dangers, the Convention adopted the most energetic measures, and the Jacobins resorted to their usual means to agitate and sway the public mind. The powers of the Revolutionary Tribunal were augmented ; instead of proceeding on a decree of the Convention, as the warrant for judging of an accused person, it was empowered to *accuse* and *judge* at the same time. All the Sans-Culottes were directed to be armed with a pike and a fusil, at the expense of the opulent classes ; a forced loan of a milliard (£40,000,000) was ordered to be exacted from those persons possessed of any property, and extraordinary taxes were levied in every department, according to the pleasure of the revolutionary commissioners. The municipality of Paris demanded the imposition of a maximum on the price of provisions—a demand certain of popularity with the lower orders, and the refusal of which increased their dissatisfaction with the measures of the Convention. At the same time another decree was passed, which imposed upon all proprietors an extraordinary war-tax : and a third, which organised forty-one commissions, of two members each, to go down to the departments, armed with full powers to enforce the recruiting, disarm the refractory, seize all the horses destined for the purposes of luxury—in a word, exercise the most despotic sovereignty. These commissioners generally exercised their powers with the utmost rigour ; and being armed with irresistible authority, and supported by the whole revolutionary party, laid the foundations of that iron net in which France was enveloped during the Reign of Terror.²

33.
Vigorous
measures of
the Conven-
tion.
March 12
and 15.

¹ Deux
Amis, x. 26,
29. Th. iv.
66. Mij. i.
248, 249.
Hist. Parl.
xxv. 153,
155. Lac.
ii. 65, 66.

But all these measures, energetic and vigorous as they

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34.

Important
decree con-
ferring the
power of
domiciliary
visits on the
revolution-
ary com-
mittees.
March 21.

were, and materially as they affected the future progress of the Revolution, yielded in moment to that which the Jacobins shortly after succeeded in extorting from the fears and weakness of the Convention. This was embodied in two decrees, by the first of which, passed on the 21st of March, it was enacted that in every commune of the Republic of France, and in every section of a commune which was divided into sections, there should be formed at the same hour, over the whole of France, by the election of all the inhabitants, a committee of twelve persons,—of which committee no noble or ecclesiastic, or agent or dependent of a noble or ecclesiastic, could be a member—who were empowered instantly to arrest every person within its bounds who was suspected of being a foreigner or emigrant, or one of the individuals included in the list of emigrants, and who was ordered to be enjoined to leave the territory of the commune in twenty-four hours, and that of the Republic in eight days, under pain of being sentenced to ten years of the galleys in irons. Every such person taken in tumult or insurrection, was declared liable to the punishment of death. As the election of these commissioners in the communes, particularly in the towns, fell into the hands of the extreme Jacobin party, the effect of this decree was to invest that party, in all the 48,000 communes of France, with the right of making domiciliary visits in every house, under pretence of searching for foreigners or emigrants who had not returned within the time specified in former decrees, and throwing them into prison, or, in the event of any resistance or disturbance, sentencing them at once to death. As the proceedings of these committees in arresting were subject to no review whatever, and the revolutionary tribunals, which were soon everywhere established in imitation of the one in the capital, supported all their proceedings, this decree, in effect, gave the Jacobins the entire command of the life and liberty of every man in France.¹

¹ Decree,
March 21.
Hist. Parl.
xv. 134,
137.

The other decree, which passed on the 25th of the same month, was attended with still more momentous consequences, as it established the famous Committee, for the general government of the kingdom, of GENERAL DEFENCE and PUBLIC SAFETY. Barère opened the subject with a gloomy representation of the state of the Republic, threatened as it was with invasion in Flanders, and insurrection in la Vendée and in Lyons. "I summon you," said he, "in the name of the public salvation, to unite to save yourselves in saving your country. It is in vain, in the present distracted state of the provinces, to talk of convoking the primary assemblies. We must concentrate power, and not divide it ; no authority must exist which does not flow from the representatives of the people." Barbaroux in vain resisted this proposal : it was cheered nearly unanimously. On the day following, it was agreed, on the motion of Isnard, to appoint a committee of general defence and of public safety. It was to consist of twenty-five members, and to be charged with "the preparation and proposing of all the laws and measures necessary for the exterior and interior defence of the Republic." The executive council was ordered to give every assistance and information to this committee. Its composition, however, showed that the contest of the Girondists and Jacobins was still undecided, for the leaders of the two parties were appointed in nearly equal proportions members of the committee.* At the same time, Gohier was named to succeed Danton in the office of minister of justice, as the transference of Danton to the Committee was likely to absorb his whole time and attention.¹ †

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35.

Decree
establishing
the Com-
mittee of
General
Defence.
March 24.

March 25.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxv. 139,
141. Moni-
teur, 27th
March.

* The original members of this committee were Robespierre, Pétion, Dubois-Crance, Gensonné, Guyton-Morveau, Barbaroux, Ruhl, Vergniaud, Fabre d'Eglantine, Buzot, Delmas, Guadet, Condorcet, Bréard, Camus, Prieur (de la Marne), Camille-Desmoulins, Barère, Quinette, Danton, Sièyes, la Source, Cambacérès, Isnard, Jean Debret. The Girondists at this time had the majority in its members.—*Histoire Parlementaire*, xxxv. 141.

† By a singular coincidence, the author has been fortunate enough to acquire the extensive and valuable collection of revolutionary tracts and

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36.
Laws for
disarming
the emi-
grants,
priests, and
suspected
persons.
March 26.

Several measures, almost overlooked during the dreadful crash of events which soon followed, passed the Convention without attracting much notice during this period of anxiety and alarm, but all tending, in a remarkable manner, to augment the despotic power now daily and more rapidly being centralised in the Jacobin leaders at Paris. On the 26th of March it was decreed that the whole clergy and noblesse, with their servants and retainers, should be disarmed, as being all persons suspected ; that the searches might be made during the night ; and that, if they again acquired arms, they should be imprisoned.

March 27.

On the 27th, additional powers were conferred on the Revolutionary Tribunal ; and all inferior tribunals were directed to send a list of their accused persons to the central court at Paris, to see if they should be selected for trial there. On the same day a decree was passed, ordering every householder in France, within three days, to affix a list on the outside of his house, of all the persons resident or lodging there ; compelling them, within the same time, to send a duplicate of their lists to the committee of the commune or section.¹

¹ Decrees,
26th and
27th March.
Hist. Parl.
xxv. 142,
150.

37.

Vehe-
ment
agitation
which suc-
ceeded on
Dumou-
rier's flight.
April 5.

During the period that the contest with Dumourier was going on, Marat in his journal, and the Jacobins in their debates, thundered in the loudest terms against that general and his counter-revolutionary designs. But when his arrest of the commissioners of the Convention, and flight into Austrian Flanders, became known in Paris on the 4th April, the agitation rose to the highest pitch. At the municipality the scene was stormy beyond example ; and the legislature, on the motion of Danton, decreed, amidst the most vehement agitation, the immediate formation of a camp of forty thousand men in the neighbourhood of the capital, from which all nobles and ex-nobles were to be rigidly excluded. At the same time a maximum was fixed on the price of bread ; the difference

journals formed by Gohier during the sitting of the Legislative Assembly and Convention, and is now surrounded by them in his interesting labours.

of such price and the cost of production being to be laid as a tax on the rich. The Jacobins took advantage of the general consternation to propose the establishment of a new committee of nine members, to be called the COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SALVATION. To achieve this great object, they held out the most violent threats against the Convention. "We shall never succeed," said Robespierre the younger at the Jacobin Club, "in defeating the designs of our enemies as long as we speak only, and do not act. Roland is not yet arrested : he has even received honours from his section. The Convention has shown itself incapable of governing : we must attack its leaders. Citizens, come not here to offer your arms and your lives—come to demand the blood of the criminals. Let the good citizens unite in their sections ; let them rouse public opinion as strongly as possible, and come to the bar of the Convention to demand the arrest of the infidel deputies. It is by such measures alone that you can save the Republic."¹

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¹ Journal
des Jaco-
bins, 5th
April 1793,
No. 389.

Strengthened by these menaces, the Jacobins next day brought forward in the Convention the proposal for the establishment of a committee with a right to deliberate in secret, and armed with despotic powers. Buzot, on the part of the Girondists, strongly opposed this proposal, but the Plain, or neutrals, joined the Jacobins. "We must," said Marat, "adopt a great measure for the public salvation. The torpor of the executive, its negligence in regard to the armies, its evident connivance with the traitorous generals, call for the instant adoption of vigorous measures. Talk not of dictators ! A dictator is a single man vested with absolute power : what is now proposed is a committee of nine men, appointed by the Convention, and capable of being dissolved at any moment by it. And who are the men who now declaim against a dictator ? The very men who strove to concentrate all power in the hands of Roland. Very possibly even this committee may not prove sufficiently powerful : it is by violence alone that liberty is to be established ; and the time has

38.
Appoint-
ment of the
Committee
of Public
Salvation.
April 6.

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come *when we must organise the despotism of liberty to overturn the despotism of kings.*" Loud applause from the galleries and the extreme left followed these words, and amidst the general transport, the awful Committee of Public Salvation was established.* On the same day—an ominous conjunction!—the new Revolutionary Tribunal commenced its sittings, and immediately condemned Louis Guizot Dumollans, an emigrant, accused of having been found in arms in France contrary to the law of 23d October, to the punishment of death. He was executed four hours afterwards, protesting he had never heard of the law till his sentence was pronounced.¹

¹ Bulletin
du Tribunal
Révolution.
No. 1. Hist.
Parl. xxv.
299, 304.

39.
The Girondists
are denounced
by Robespierre.

April 8.

² Hist. Parl.
xxv. 320,
337.

Alarmed by the commencement of punishment by this formidable tribunal, and by the constant succession of orators of the sections of Paris, who loudly demanded at the bar the immediate denunciation of Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonné, Brissot, Barbaroux, Louvet, and all the leaders of the Gironde, with threats of instant insurrection if they were not forthwith arrested and sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal,† the Girondists resolved on a last effort to rescue their party from the destruction with which it was menaced. Meanwhile, however, they were anticipated by the Jacobins, who brought forward a motion for the denunciation of the Duke of Orleans and the whole Girondists as guilty of high treason, along with Dumourier. This was the commencement of the terrible strife which ended with the fall of the latter party.²

“A powerful faction,” said Robespierre, in the Convention, “combines with the tyrants of Europe to give us a king, with a species of aristocratic constitution. It pro-

* The persons chosen for this committee were Baùre, Delmas, Bréard, Cambon, Jean Debretz, Danton, Guyton-Morveau, Treillard, and Delacroix. — *Hist. Parl.* xxv. 307.

† “L'orateur de la Section Mauconseil: ‘Depuis assez longtemps la voix publique vous désigne les Vergniaud, les Guadet, les Gensonné, les Brissot, les Barbaroux, les Louvet, les Buzet, &c. Qu'attendez-vous pour les frapper du décret d'accusation? Vous mettez Dumourier hors la loi, mais vous laissez à ses côtés ses complices. Vous manquez il des preuves? Les calomnies qu'ils ont lancées contre Paris déposent contre eux. Patriotes

poses to bring us back to that shameful compromise by the force of foreign armies, and the effect of internal intrigues. A republic suits only the people, and those few in the higher conditions who have pure and upright minds. External warfare is the system of Pitt, who is the soul of the coalition ; it suits all the ambitious ; it suits the *burgher aristocracy*, ever trembling for their property, and filled with horror at real equality ; it pleases the nobles—too happy to find in a representation based on the aristocracy, and in the court of a new king, the distinctions which have slipped from their hands. The aristocratic system is that of Lafayette, and all such persons as are known under the name of Feuillans or Moderates ; it is the system of those who have succeeded in their place. Persons have changed, but the end is the same—the means even are the same, with this difference, that their successors have augmented their resources and increased the number of their partisans. This ambitious faction has never made use of the people, except to serve its own purposes ; it has never coalesced with the Jacobins, but to elevate itself. On the 10th August it strove to shield the tyrant from the just vengeance of the people ; it strove to bring us back to royalty, by giving a preceptor to his son. I need not designate this party ; it is to the Brissots, the Guadets, the Vergniauds, the Gensonnés, and the other hypocrites of their faction alone, that the description applies.

“ Every step of theirs has been marked by a departure from the principles of the Revolution : never have they marched with it, except when constrained by necessity. They appropriated to themselves the whole fruits of the victory of the 10th August, by restoring their minions,

de la Montagne ! c'est sur vous que se repose la patrie du soin de désigner les traîtres. Il est temps de les dépouiller de l'inviolabilité liberticide : sortez de ce sommeil qui tue la liberté : levez-vous ! livrez aux tribunaux les hommes que l'opinion publique accuse ; déclarez la guerre à tous les Modérés, aux Feuillans—à tous ces agens de la ci-devant cour des Tuileries. Paraissez à cette tribune, ardens patriotes !—appelez le glaive de la loi sur la tête de ces inviolables conspirateurs, et alors la postérité bénira le temps où vous avez existé.”—*Hist. Parl.*, xxv. 311, 312 ; 8 Avril 1793.

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40.

Robespierre's
speech
against the
Girondists.

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Roland, Servan, and Clavière, to office ; but, with the same breath, they began to calumniate the municipality of Paris, which alone had in reality gained the victory. To destroy the vast centre of public intelligence and republican virtue which exists in this immortal city, they incessantly slandered the citizens of Paris, representing them as a mere band of sanguinary assassins, of bloodthirsty vultures. Hence their eternal declamations against the revolutionary justice which punished the Montmorins, the Lessarts, and their brother conspirators, at the moment when the people and the *fédérés* were rising in a mass to repel the Prussians, whom their weak and treacherous administration had brought almost to the gates of the capital. Louis would have been brought to justice the very day the Convention met, if it had not been for their exertions. During four months they protracted the proceedings against the tyrant. Who can reflect without shuddering on the arts, the shuffling, the chicane to which they had recourse to avert the uplifted sword of national vengeance ; or on the perfidious audacity with which they have sheltered the emigrants, and favoured their return to light the flames of that civil war which even now burns so fiercely in la Vendée and the western provinces ?

“ This just punishment of the tyrant—the single and glorious triumph of the Republic—has postponed only for a moment their unwearied activity against the sovereignty of the people. Won by their arts, the very generals of the Republic have betrayed us. Where are now Lafayette and Dumourier ? How often have they been denounced as traitors in the patriotic clubs !—how often have been predicted the disasters which they would bring upon the arms of the Republic ! They alone, leagued with the court, dragged us into the war ; the Jacobins uniformly opposed it. Who does not now see their object in so doing ? what other was it but to bring the foreigners into our bosom, to light a civil war on our hearths, to deliver over our allies to their vengeance ? But for the revolt of

the 10th August, all their objects would have been gained, and the counter-revolution, aided by foreign bayonets and domestic treachery, would now have been triumphant. Dumourier, their creature, was impelled by the vigour of the Republic to a brilliant success; and after the battle of Jemappes, if he had pushed on at once into Holland, and raised the standard of Republicanism in that country, England was ruined and Europe revolutionised. Instead of this, he halted in the midst of victory: and why? Because he was restrained by the Executive Council. He did, by their orders, everything in his power to prevent the execution of the decrees of 19th November and 15th December, which could alone consolidate the external conquests of the Republic. Would you ally yourselves with anarchy and murder? was the constant exclamation of the Guadets and the Gensonnés; and thus it was that they damped the ardour of the Allies who were joining us in Flanders, and arrested our victorious legions till the enemy had again collected sufficient forces to threaten our frontiers. All the measures of Dumourier in the Low Countries were calculated to favour the counter-revolution; until at length, gorged with the wealth which he had acquired in Belgium, and rampant with his support in the foreign alliances, he openly avowed his intention to restore royalty, and hoisted the standard of treason in the republican camp. And who accompanied him in his flight to the stranger? Was it not young Egalité, the son of d'Orleans? During all this time the Committee of General Safety, with Vergniaud at their head, have constantly retarded every measure calculated to promote the general safety, to give Dumourier time to complete his detestable projects. I demand that all the individuals of the family of Orleans should be sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal, as well as Sillery and his wife,* Vergniaud, Guadet, and their accomplices.”¹ †

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxv. 337,
361. Moni-
teur, April
9.

* Madame Genlis.

† In making these accusations, Robespierre was only giving public vent to

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41.
Vergniaud's
reply.

Vergniaud immediately rose to reply; but he could not be heard for some time for the loud applauses from the Mountain and the galleries at the conclusion of Robespierre's address. "It is," said he, "with a heart penetrated with grief that I rise to reply to accusations, the absurdity of which is only equalled by their malignity, at a time when the dangers of the country require all our united efforts. I will show who are the real accomplices of Dumourier. If we strove to moderate the movement on the 10th August, which, ill-directed, might have led to a regency, or a new sovereign, were we enemies to liberty? Did not we propose a republic in lieu of that royalty under which France had groaned for so many centuries? Did we not suspend the King amidst the clang of the tocsin on the 10th August? Robespierre, doubtless, knew nothing of these things, for he prudently hid himself in a cellar during the whole conflict. When the father was suspended from all authority, was there anything hostile to liberty in appointing a preceptor for his son, to preserve him from the courtly ideas he might otherwise have imbibed? The thing is too ridiculous to require a serious answer.

"We have praised Lafayette, and this is now brought as a charge against us: is there any one in the Convention who has not done the same? We entered into the war with Austria; was not that measure unanimously supported by the Legislative Assembly? Was not war *de facto* declared by the accumulation of Austrian and Prussian forces on our frontier; and did we not judge

the opinions on the Girondists which, in common with the whole Jacobins, he had long entertained. This appears in a striking way from the following private conversation he had with Garat about this time, which the latter has recounted in his memoirs. "All the deputies of the Gironde," said Robespierre, "your Brissot, your Louvet, your Barbaroux, are counter-revolutionists and conspirators." "Where do they conspire?" asked Garat. "Everywhere," rejoined Robespierre; "in Paris, throughout France, over Europe. The Girondists have for long formed the design of separating the southern provinces from France, to reinstate the ancient principality of Guienne, and form an alliance with England. Gensonné says openly, 'We are not here as the representatives, but the plenipotentiaries of the Gironde.' Brissot aids the conspiracy by his journal, which is

rightly in taking the initiative to remove the contest from our own frontiers? But we are charged with having calumniated the council-general of the municipality of Paris. Have we done so? During its administration enormous dilapidations were committed on the national domains, on the movables of emigrants, on the houses of royalists, on the effects deposited in the municipality; and, to put an end to these dilapidations, I proposed a decree that they should give an account of the property they had acquired. Was that calumniating the municipality? Was it not rather furnishing them with an opportunity of establishing their innocence? Robespierre accuses us of calumniating Paris. So far from it, I have constantly maintained that the massacres which have disgraced the Revolution, were the work of a small band of assassins who had flocked there from all parts of the Republic; and it was to exculpate Paris that I wished to surrender the real assassins to the sword of the law. The real calumniators of Paris are those who, by striving to secure impunity to the brigands, confess that they belong to themselves. Which calumniates the people—the man who declares them innocent of the crimes of stranger assassins, or the man who obstinately persists in imputing, to the entire people, the odium of these scenes of blood?

“We are accused of having wished to leave Paris when the Prussians were in Champagne. This comes with singular propriety from Robespierre, who at that period wished to fly to Marseilles. But the accusation is an infamous calumny. If driven from Paris, we constantly

the tocsin of civil war. He has just gone to London—we know why: his friend Clavière has been a conspirator all his life. Roland is in correspondence with the traitor Montesquiou: they labour together to open Savoy and France to the Piedmontese forces. Servan was only named general of the army of the Pyrenees to open their gates to the Spaniards. Dumourier menaces Paris more than either Belgium or Holland. That heroic charlatan, whom I would instantly have arrested, dines every day with the Girondists. *Ah! I am tired of the Revolution: I am sick at heart.* Never was this country in such danger: I doubt much if it can be yet saved.”—“Have you no doubts,” said Garat, “of the truth of all you have said?”—“None in the world,” replied Robespierre.—See GARAT, *Mémoires*, 112; LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, iv. 235, 236.

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maintained that the Revolution was lost : it was there we were determined to live or die. We have become moderate Feuillans ! We were not so on the 10th August, when you, Robespierre, were in your cellar. We have heard much lately of the rights of insurrection, and I lament it. I understand insurrection where it has an object, when tyranny is there ; but when the statue of liberty is on the throne, insurrection can be provoked only by the friends of royalty. Yes ! it is the friends of royalty, or of tyranny under some other name, who would now provoke an insurrection. You are seeking to consummate the Revolution by terror : I would complete it by love. But I have yet to learn that, like the priests and barbarous ministers of the Inquisition, who speak of the God of pity at the stake, we should speak of liberty in the midst of poniards and executioners. You will find the real accomplices of Dumourier in the conspirators against the Convention on the 10th March, and in those who have since rendered nugatory your decrees for their punishment.”¹

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxv. 361,
364. Moni-
teur, April
11.

42.

Marat is sent
to the Revo-
lutionary
Tribunal.
April 13.

The Girondists had still the majority in the Convention, and this accusation of Robespierre was quashed. But the Jacobins were not discouraged ; and, relying on the support of the armed sections of Paris, they published an address, on the instigation of Marat, and signed by him, from the Jacobins of Paris to the affiliated societies in the departments, in which they called on them to arm, and rise in insurrection against the Convention.* This address was read by Guadet in the Assembly ; and it excited such consternation that the cries arose on all sides, “ A l’Abbaye ! a l’Abbaye ! ” and Marat was, by acclamation from three-fourths of the legislature, ordered to

* “ Amis, nous sommes trahis ! Aux armes ! Aux armes ! Voici l’heure terrible où les défenseurs de la patrie doivent vaincre ou s’ensevelir sous les décombres de la République. Français ! jamais votre liberté ne fut en plus grand péril ; nos ennemis ont enfin mis le sceau à leurs noires perfidies ; et pour les consommer, Dumourier, leur complice, marche sur Paris. Frères et amis ! vos plus grands ennemis sont au milieu de vous ; ils dirigent vos opérations, vos vengeances ; ils conduisent vos moyens de défense. Oui ! c’est dans le sénat que

be sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal. Danton and the Jacobins vehemently resisted this ; but it was carried, after a furious altercation, by a large majority. This was the first instance of the inviolability of the Convention being broken through ; and, as such, it afforded an unfortunate precedent, which the sanguinary party was not slow in following. Yet the accusation of Marat was in reality no violation of the privileges of the legislature. He was sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal, not for what he said or did in the Convention, but for a circular addressed to the departments as president of the Jacobin Club ; and it was never supposed that the members were privileged to commit treason without its walls.¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xxv. 429,
430. Journ.
des Jacobins,
April 11. No. 184.
Toul. iv.
339. Th.
iv. 150.

The Jacobins lost no time in adopting measures to counteract this vigorous step. The clubs, the multitude, and the centre of insurrection, the municipality, were put in motion. The whole force of popular agitation was called forth to save, as they expressed it, “that austere, profound philosopher, formed by meditation and misfortune, gifted with such profound sagacity, and so great a knowledge of the human heart, who alone penetrated the designs of traitors on their triumphal cars, at the moment when the stupid vulgar were still loading them with applause.” Pache, the mayor of Paris, appeared at the bar of the Convention, to demand, in the name of five-and-thirty sections, and of the municipality, the expulsion of the leaders of the Gironde. “The Parisians,” said they, “first commenced the Revolution by overturning the Bastille, which was ready to thunder over their heads : they have come to-day to destroy a new tyranny, because they are the first witnesses of it. They are the first to raise, in the heart of France, the cry of

43.

Vehement
agitation to
counteract
this step.
April 15.

de parricides mains déchirent vos entrailles ! Oui ! la contre-revolution est dans la Convention Nationale. C'est là, c'est au centre de votre sûreté et de vos espérances, que de criminels délégués tiennent les fils de la trame qu'ils ont ourdie avec la horde des despotes qui viennent nous égorger. C'est là qu'une cabale dirigée par la cour d'Angleterre et autres — Mais déjà l'indignation enflamme vos courageux cœurs. Allons, Républicains — armons-nous !” — MARAT, *Journal des Jacobins*, 11 Avril, No. 174.

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indignation. We come not to accuse the majority of the Convention, which has shown its virtue by condemning the tyrant : we come to specify the perfidious men, his allies in the Convention, who have never ceased striving to save him, and are now endeavouring to sell us to England, and bring us back to slavery. We have not destroyed hereditary tyranny only to make way for that which is elective : already the departments are revoking your powers : hear now their demand. We call upon you to send this address of the majority of the sections of Paris to the departments ; and that, as soon as they have intimated their adherence, the after-mentioned deputies be expelled from the Assembly.”* The young and generous Boyer Fonfrède demanded to be included in the list of the proscribed—an act of devotion which subsequently cost him his life. All the members of the right and centre rose, and insisted upon being joined with their colleagues in the accusation. The petition was rejected, but the designs of its authors were gained ; it accustomed the people to the spectacle of the Convention being besieged by popular clamour, and impaired the majesty of the legislature by exhibiting the impunity with which its members might be assailed.¹

¹ Hist. Parl. xxvi. 3, 7. Toul. iii. 339, 340. Mig. i. 259. Th. iv. 150. Lac. ii. 67. Deux Amis, x. 247.

44.
Marat is acquitted.

Marat was accompanied to the Revolutionary Tribunal by the whole leaders of the Jacobin party. His trial from the outset was a mere mockery, and certain to terminate in a triumph to his supporters ; for how could a tribunal instituted to try crimes against the sovereignty of the people find one guilty who had been loudest in asserting it ? He entered the court with the air of a conqueror. His first words were—“ Citizens ! it is not a guilty person who appears before you ; it is the apostle and martyr of liberty, against whom a handful of intriguers and factious men have obtained a decree of accu-

* Brissot, Guadet, Vergniaud, Gensonné, Grangeneuve, Buzot, Barbaroux, Salles, Brotteau, Ponte-Coulard, Pétion, Lanjuinais, Valazé, Hardy, le Hardy, Louvet, Gorsas, Fauchet, Lanthenas, la Source, Valady, Chambon. — *Hist. Parl.* xxvi. 7.

sation." He was acquitted, and brought back in triumph to the Convention. An immense multitude came with him to the gates : the leaders of the mob entered, and exclaimed—"We bring you back the brave Marat, the tried friend of the people : they will never cease to espouse his cause !" A sapper broke off from the multitude, and exclaimed—"Marat was ever the friend of the people : had his head fallen, the head of the sapper would have fallen with it !" At these words he brandished his axe in the air, amidst shouts of applause from the Mountain and the galleries. The mob insisted upon defiling in triumph through the hall : before the president could consult the Convention on the subject the unruly body rushed in, bearing down all opposition, and, climbing over all the barriers, seated themselves in the vacant places of the deputies, who retired in disgust from such a scene of violence. The Convention beheld in silence the defeat of its measures ; the Jacobins redoubled their efforts to improve the victory they had gained. The approaches were incessantly besieged by an unruly mob, who clamoured for vengeance against the proscribed deputies : the galleries were filled by partisans of the Jacobins, who stifled the arguments of their opponents, and loudly applauded the most violent proposals : the clubs, at night, resounded with demands of vengeance against the traitor faction.¹

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¹ Toul. 260.
Lac. ii. 66.
Hist. Parl.
xxvi. 129,
130. Mig.
i. 260. Th.
iv. 151, 152.
Bull. du
Trib. Rév.
April 15.

Although, however, the most execrable character of the Revolution, one who had never ceased for years to urge the people to deeds of atrocity and blood, was thus acquitted by the Revolutionary Tribunal ; yet it was by no means equally indulgent to accused persons of another stamp, and it had already evinced that insatiate thirst for blood which subsequently rendered its proceedings so terrible. As fast as persons accused of royalist or moderate sentiments were brought before it, they were convicted without either distinction or mercy. Besides several persons of inferior note, who were condemned and

45.
Numerous
condemnations of the
Revolutionary Tri-
bunal.

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April 15. executed in the first three weeks of April, Louis Philippe Blanchelande, formerly marshal of the camp, was convicted of attempts tending to disturb the state, and suffered death : Jeanne Clerc, of having attempted to re-establish royalty, underwent the same penalty : Anne Hyacinthe de Vagous, colonel of dragoons, was sentenced and executed the next day on the same charge : Gabriel Duguigny, a returned emigrant, suffered with uncommon firmness on the 21st ; and on the 27th, François Boucher, a dentist, and Charles Mingot, a hackney coachman, were condemned and executed for having used expressions tending to royalty. They died exclaiming, "Vive Louis XVII.!" Already it had become evident that this terrible tribunal, instead of dispensing justice against all the enemies of the state with an equal hand, had become, under the influence of the vehement popular excitement and intimidation with which it was surrounded, nothing but a formidable engine in the hands of the Jacobin faction, for securing for themselves impunity for the worst crimes, and destroying on the most trifling grounds all their opponents.¹

¹ Bull. du Tribunal Rév. pp. 39, 84.

46.
Increasing difficulties of finding subsistence for the people, and new demands for a maximum.

The execution of persons accused of moderate or royalist opinions, however, could neither supply the markets, lower prices, nor fill the treasury ; and the pressure of these exigencies, amidst its fierce internal contests, occupied no small portion of the time of the Convention. All its efforts to attain these objects, however, were nugatory : for the vast and increasing expenditure of the Republic could only, amidst the total failure of the taxes, be supplied by the issue of assignats : and this, of course, by rendering paper money redundant, lowered its value in exchange with other commodities, and occasioned a constant and even frightful rise of prices. The people did not understand this, and conceived, on the contrary, that the prices of all articles should fall, now that the reign of liberty and equality was established. The Jacobins incessantly told them it was all owing to the monopolisers,

who, in league with the Royalists, Girondists, and Moderates, had entered into an infernal conspiracy to starve the people. The municipality of Paris, acting on this impulse, repeatedly and formally demanded from the Convention the fixing of a maximum on all articles of provision, accompanied with the denunciation of the penalty of death against all who should ask a higher sum; and proposed that the dealers should be indemnified for their losses by a forced tax on the rich. At length the clamour became so violent that the Assembly, on 2d May, passed a decree, fixing for a limited time a maximum on the price of grain, and imposing a forced loan of 1,000,000,000 francs (£40,000,000) on the rich, to be levied by taxing the whole of every proprietor's income who had a fortune that exceeded 2000 francs yearly.¹

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¹ Journ. des Jacobins, Avril 22 and 27. Séances de la Commune, Avril 30. Hist. Parl. xxvi. 226, 227, 340. Deux Amis, x. 282, 283.

It was not surprising that prices rose in this alarming manner; for the issue of assignats from the public treasury had now become unprecedented in the history of the world. The Convention, upon the report of the minister of finance, decreed, on the 7th May, the immediate issue of 1,200,000,000 francs in paper (£48,000,000), *in addition* to 3,100,000,000 francs (£124,000,000) already in circulation! It was of course inevitable that so prodigious an issue of paper, in a country not at that period containing above twenty-five million souls, and with scarcely any commerce, external or internal, amidst the existing convulsions, should lead to a universal rise of prices, to such an extent as at once to destroy the fortunes of the rich, and increase tenfold the sufferings of the poor. The confusion of prices and depreciation of the assignats, under the influence of this enormous addition to the circulating medium of the country, soon became such that debts were discharged in assignats bearing a forced circulation, for a third of the sum for which they had been contracted, and the price of provisions was tripled.² Nor is this report of the finance minister less important, as

^{47.} Enormous issue of fresh assignats. May 7.

² Rapport de Jomartot, ministre des finances. Mai 7, 1793. Hist. Parl. xxvi. 377, 378. Moniteur, Mai 7.

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exhibiting, on the one hand, the enormous defalcation of the ordinary revenue, which was estimated at 1,000,000,000 francs (£40,000,000), and on the other, the stupendous amount of the confiscated property belonging to the church and the emigrants, which, after deducting the whole debts with which it was charged, was valued at 6,700,000,000 francs, or £268,000,000 sterling.*

48.
Proposal of
Guadet for a
separation of
the Conven-
tion repell-
ed, and Com-
mission of
Twelve ap-
pointed.
May 10.

The incessant declamations of the Jacobins at their central club, in the forty-eight sections of Paris, at the club of the Cordeliers, and in the hall of the municipality, aided by the incendiary press of Marat, Fréron, Hébert, and the other revolutionary journals, at length, coupled with these substantial grievances, worked the people up into such a state of fury, that they became ready for a general insurrection against the authority of the Convention. As a last resource, Guadet, one of the most energetic and intrepid leaders of the Gironde, proposed the convocation of the supplementary members of the Assembly† at Bourges, and the dissolution of the existing municipality of Paris. “Citizens,” said he, “while good men lament in silence the misfortunes of the country, the conspirators are in motion to destroy it. Like Cæsar, they exclaim—‘Let others speak, we act!’ To meet them we must act also. The evil lies in the impunity of the

* The total amount of the resources of the Republic was stated in this report to be—

	Francs.
1. Arrears of taxes and contributions,	1,000,000,000 or £40,000,000
2. Due on national domains sold,	2,000,000,000 — 80,000,000
3. Woods and forests,	1,200,000,000 — 48,000,000
4. Effects on the civil list,	300,000,000 — 12,000,000
5. Engaged domains,	100,000,000 — 4,000,000
6. Feudal rights,	50,000,000 — 2,000,000
7. Salt mines,	50,000,000 — 2,000,000
8. Unsold national domains of emigrants, } deducting debts,	3,000,000,000 — 120,000,000

7,700,000,000 £308,000,000

of which £268,000,000, or 6,700,000,000 francs, arose from the confiscated estates. See *Rapport de JOHANNOT sur les Finances de la République*, 7th May 1793; *Hist. Parl.* xxvi. 378.

† Members elected to supply any vacancies which might occur during the sitting of the Convention.

conspirators of March 10 ; in the preparing of anarchy ; in the misrule of the authorities of Paris, who thirst only for power and gold. There is yet time to save the country, and our own tarnished honour. I propose instantly to annul the authorities of Paris ; to replace the municipality by the presidents of the sections ; to unite the supplementary members of the Convention at Bourges ; and to announce this resolution to the departments by extraordinary couriers." These decisive measures, if adopted by the Assembly, would have destroyed the power of the municipality and the designs of the conspirators ; but they would have at once occasioned a civil war, and, by dividing the centre of action, augmented the danger of foreign subjugation. The majority was influenced by these considerations ; the separation of the Assembly into two divisions, one at Paris and one at Bourges, seemed the immediate forerunner of conflicting governments. Barère supported these opinions. " It is by union and firmness," he said, " that you must dissipate the storms which assail you ; division will accelerate your ruin. Do you imagine that, if the conspirators dissolve the Convention in the centre of its power, they will have any difficulty in disposing of its remnant assembled at Bourges ? I propose that we should nominate a commission of twelve persons, to watch over the designs of the commune, to examine into the recent disorders, and arrest the persons of their authors ; but never, by acceding to the measures of Guadet, declare ourselves unequal to combat the influence of the municipality." This proposal was adopted by the Convention, ever ready to temporise rather than adopt a decisive course, and the opportunity of destroying the municipality was lost for ever.¹

The Commission of Twelve, however, commenced their proceedings with vigorous measures. A conspiracy against the majority of the Convention had for some time been openly organised in Paris ; the club of the Cordeliers was the centre of the movement, and an insurrectionary com-

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May 15.
¹ Hist. Parl.
 xxvii. 129,
 132. Toul.
 iii. 261.
 Mig. i. 260,
 261. Th. iv.
 193. Deux
 Amis, x.
 234, 235.

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49.
General in-
surrection
against the
Girondists
and Con-
vention.
May 21.

mittee sat night and day. The public fervour soon demanded more than the mere proscription of the thirty deputies ; three hundred were required. Varlet had openly proposed a plan for the insurrection, which was discussed amidst furious cries at the Cordeliers, and the execution of the design was fixed for the 22d May. It was agreed that the armed multitude should proceed to the hall of the Convention, with the Rights of Man veiled with crape, to seize and expel all the members who had belonged to the Constituent or Legislative Assemblies, turn out the ministry, and destroy all who bore the name of Bourbon. The commission speedily obtained evidence of this conspiracy, and arrested one of its leaders, Hébert, the author of an obscene and revolting revolutionary journal, entitled the *Père Duchesne*, which had acquired immense circulation among the followers of the municipality. That turbulent body instantly put itself in a state of insurrection, declared its sittings permanent, and invited the people to raise the standard of revolt. Some of the most violent sections followed its example ; the few who held out for the Assembly were besieged by clamorous bands of armed men. The club of the Jacobins, of the Cordeliers, of the revolutionary sections, sat day and night ; the agitation of Paris rose to the highest pitch.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, x.
282, 290.
Hist. Parl.
xxvii. 203.
Lac. ii. 67,
68. Mig. i.
261, 262.
Th. iv. 206,
211.

50.
The Com-
mission of
Twelve
propose an
armed guard
for the Con-
vention.
May 25.

The Commission of Twelve, in this extremity, brought forward a measure eminently calculated to rescue the Convention from the dreadful thralldom to the armed force of Paris, to which they had hitherto been subjected. Vigée, in its name, said in the Assembly—"From the very first steps of our career, we have discovered the traces of a horrible conspiracy against the Republic, against the national representation, against the lives of many of its members, and of other citizens. Every step we have taken has brought to light new proofs : yet a few days and the Republic is lost ; you yourselves are no more. (*Low murmurs on the left.*) I declare solemnly,

on the responsibility of the whole Commission, that if France is not soon convinced of the existence of a conspiracy to murder many of yourselves, and to establish on the ruins of the Republic the most horrid and degrading despotism—if we do not demonstrate to all the world the existence of this conspiracy, we are ready to lay our heads on the scaffold.” He then proposed, as a preliminary measure, a decree ordering all the citizens of Paris to be ready to join their respective sections at a moment’s notice, and in the mean time to send two men from each company, to form a permanent guard for the Convention, and that the assemblies of the sections should close their sittings every night at latest at ten o’clock.¹

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1793.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxvii. 185,
186. Moni-
teur, Mai
26.

This was going to work in the right spirit ; for it proposed to establish an armed force, to counterbalance that of which the Jacobins and municipality had the disposal. They stoutly denied, therefore, the existence of any conspiracy. “ We are called upon,” said Marat, “ to discuss measures directed against a supposed conspiracy. I protest against discussing a motion founded on a fable. I know that you never can cure fear ; it is on that account that you never can cure statesmen. But I declare I know of no other conspiracy in France except that of the Girondists.” Danton strongly supported the same side. “ What is the use,” said he, “ of additional laws to protect the national representation ? The existing laws are amply sufficient for that purpose ; all that is wanted is to direct them to the punishment of the really guilty. If guilty men are seized, they will find no defenders : the demand for an armed force to protect its sittings betrays fears unworthy of the National Assembly. Can there be a more decisive proof of the efficiency of the existing laws than the fact, that the National Convention is untouched ; and that if one member has perished (Lepelletier), he at least was not one of those who betrayed any apprehension ? ”² The Convention, however, now seriously alarmed, passed a decree in terms

51.

Answer of
Marat and
the Jacobins.

² Hist. Parl.
xxvii. 186,
201.

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1793.

52.
Menacing
deputations
which threaten
the Convention.
May 25.

of the proposal, and, at the same time, another, for improving the composition of the juries for the Revolutionary Tribunal, by taking them from sixteen departments chosen by lot.

These measures, if carried into effect, would have struck both at the physical force and judicial tyranny of the Jacobins ; and therefore they resolved instantly to commence their insurrections. On the next day, being the 25th May, a furious multitude assembled round the hall of the Convention, and a deputation from the municipality appeared at the bar, demanding in the most threatening terms the suppression of the Commission of Twelve, and the immediate liberation of Hébert, the imprisoned member of the magistracy. Some even went the length of insisting that the members of the Commission should immediately be sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal. “ We come,” said they, “ to denounce a crime committed by the Council of Twelve on the person of Hébert : he is in the prison of the Abbaye. The council-general of the municipality will defend him to the death. These arbitrary arrests are civic crowns for good men.” Isnard, the president of the Assembly, a courageous and eloquent Girondist, replied—“ Listen to my words : if ever the Convention is exposed to danger—if another of those insurrections, which have recurred so frequently since the 10th March, breaks out, and the Convention is outraged by an armed faction, France will rise as one man to avenge our cause, Paris will be destroyed, and soon the stranger will inquire on which bank of the Seine Paris stood.” This indignant reply produced, at the moment, a great impression ; but crowds of subsequent petitioners, whom Danton strongly supported from the benches of the Mountain, quickly appeared, and restored confidence to the conspirators. Upon the continued refusal of Isnard to order the liberation of Hébert, crowds from the Jacobin benches rose to drag him from his seat : the Girondists thronged to defend him. In the midst of the

tumult, Danton, in a voice of thunder, exclaimed—"So much impudence is beyond endurance: we will resist you: let there be no longer any truce between the Mountain and the base men who wished to save the tyrant. If there had been no ardent men there would have been no Revolution. The small number of conspirators will soon be revealed; the French people will save themselves; the mask has fallen from the faces of those who have so often sworn to defend it, but who now strive only to save the aristocrats. France will rise and prostrate its enemies."¹

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¹ Hist. Parl.
xxvii. 221.
Moniteur,
Mai 26.
Mig. i. 262.
Lac. ii. 69.
Th. iv. 213.
Deux Amis,
x. 289, 292.

The deputies from the municipality retired on that occasion, without having obtained what they desired; but they were resolved instantly to proceed to insurrection. All the remainder of the 25th, and the whole of the 26th, was spent in agitation, and exciting the people by the most inflammatory harangues. Such was the success of their efforts that, by the morning of the 27th, eight-and-twenty sections were assembled to petition for the liberation of Hébert. The Commission of Twelve could only rely on the support of the armed force of three sections; and these hastened, on the first summons, to the support of the Convention, and ranged themselves, with their arms and artillery, round the hall. But an immense multitude crowded round their ranks; cries of "Death to the Girondists!" resounded on all sides; and the hearts even of the most resolute began to quail before the fury and menacing conduct of the great majority of the people. The Girondists with difficulty maintained their ground against the Jacobins within the Convention and the furious multitude who besieged its walls, when Garat, the minister of the interior, entered, and deprived them of their last resource, the necessity of unbending firmness. When called upon to report upon the state of Paris, he declared—"That he saw no appearance of a conspiracy; that he had met with nothing but respect from the crowd which surrounded the Assembly; and that the only

53.
Desperate
contest in
the Conven-
tion, and
liberation
of Hébert.
May 27.

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1793.

perfidious design which he believed existed, was to divide, by the dread of chimerical dangers, two parties, equally desirous of promoting the public welfare." In making this report, Garat had been deceived by Pache, mayor of Paris, a furious and hypocritical Jacobin, of the most dangerous character. France had reason then to lament the retirement of the more clear-sighted Roland from his important office. Struck dumb by this extraordinary and unexpected report, which appeared accountable only on the supposition of the defection of the minister of the interior, the Girondists, for the most part, withdrew from the Assembly, and the courageous Isnard was replaced in the president's chair by Hérault de Séchelles. Yielding to the clamour which besieged the legislature, he declared—"the force of reason and of the people are the same thing; you demand a magistrate in detention, the representatives of the people restore him to you." The motion was then put, that the Commission of Twelve should be abolished, and Hébert set at liberty; it was carried at midnight, amidst shouts of triumph from the mob, who constituted the majority, by climbing over the rails, and voting on the benches of the Mountain with the Jacobins.¹

¹ Deux
Amis, x.
294, 295.
Hist. Parl.
xxvii. 267.
276. Lac.
ii. 69. Mig.
i. 263. Th.
iv. 214, 221.

54.
The decree
for which is
reversed
next day.
May 28.

Ashamed of the consequences of their untimely desertion of the Convention, the Girondists, on the following day, assembled in strength, and reversed the decree, extorted by force on the preceding evening. Lanjuinais in an especial manner distinguished himself in this debate, which was tumultuous and menacing to the very last degree. "Above fifty thousand citizens," said he, "have already been imprisoned in the departments, by orders of your commissioners; more arbitrary arrests have taken place than under the old regime in a whole century; and you have excited all this tumult, because we have put into custody two or three individuals who openly proclaimed murder and pillage. Your commissaries are proconsuls, who act far from you, and without

your knowledge ; and your whole jealousy is centred on the Commission placed under your eyes, and subject to your immediate control. On Sunday last it was proposed at the Jacobins to have a general massacre in Paris ; to-night the same proposal is to be brought forward at the Cordeliers, and the electoral club of the Evêché : the proofs of the conspiracy are ready ; we offer them to you, and yet you hesitate—you protect only assassins covered with blood.” At these words the Mountain drowned the voice of the speaker, and Legendre threatened to throw him headlong from the Tribune. “ Yesterday,” said Danton, “ you did an act of justice ; beware of departing from its example. If you persist in asserting the powers you have usurped ; if arbitrary imprisonments continue ; if the public magistrates are not restored to their functions, after having shown that we surpass our enemies in moderation and wisdom, we will show that we surpass them in audacity and revolutionary vigour.” But the intrepid Lanjuinais kept his ground ; and the decree of the preceding day was reversed by a majority of fifty-one. The Jacobins instantly broke out into the most furious exclamations. “ You have violated the ‘ Rights of Man,’ ” said Collot d’Herbois ; “ tremble ! we are about to follow your example ; they shall not serve as a shield to tyrants. Throw a veil over the statue of Liberty, so impudently placed in the midst of your hall ; we will not incur the guilt of any longer restraining the indignation of the people.” “ It is time,” said Danton, “ that the people should no longer be restrained to a defensive system. They must attack the Moderate leaders ; it is time that we should advance in our career, and secure the destinies of France. Paris has always been the terror of the enemies of liberty. Paris has once conquered ; it will conquer again.”¹

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¹ Deux
Amis, x.
296, 297.
Hist. Parl.
xxvii. 286,
291. Th. iv.
223, 224.

The agitation, which had begun to subside after the victory of the preceding evening, was renewed with

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55.
Renewal of
the insur-
rection on
31st May.

redoubled violence on the reversal of the decree. Robespierre, Marat, Danton, Chaumette, and Pache, immediately commenced the organisation of a new revolt; the 29th was employed in arranging the forces. "It is not Hébert," said Robespierre at the Jacobins, "who was attacked: it is the cause of freedom—it is the Republic. If the municipality of Paris does not now unite closely with the people, it violates its most sacred duty. The country is in danger. It is impossible for me, exhausted as I am by four years of revolutions, and the mournful spectacle of the triumph of tyranny, to specify the mode of action. I recognise no pure magistrates but those of the Mountain." On the 30th, the members of the electoral body, the commissioners of the clubs, the deputies of the sections, declared themselves in insurrection; Henriot received the command of the armed force; and the sans-culottes were promised forty sous a-day, by the municipality, while under arms. These arrangements being made, the tocsin sounded, the *générale* beat at daybreak on the morning of the 31st, and the forces of the faubourgs marched to the Tuileries, where the Convention was assembled. On this occasion, the first symptom appeared of a division between Danton and Robespierre and the more furious Jacobins: the former was desirous of procuring the abolition of the Commission of Twelve, but not of an outrage on the legislature; the latter wished to overturn the Convention by the force of the municipality. But even Robespierre was already passed in the career of revolution by more desperate insurrectionists. A general revolt had been resolved on by the central committee of insurrection—a moral insurrection, as they termed it, unaccompanied by pillage or violence, but with such an appalling display of physical force as should render resistance impossible. Forty-eight sections met, and publicly announced their determination to raise the standard of revolt; and by daybreak on the 31st all Paris was in arms.¹

¹Th. iv. 225,
236, 237.
Mig. i. 265.
Lac. ii. 70,
71. Journ.
des Jaco-
bins, Mai
29, No. 423.
Moniteur.

The national guard and the insurgent forces were at

first timid, and uncertain whose orders to obey, and for what object they were called out. The terrible cannoneers, the janizaries of the Revolution, took the lead. The cry, “Vive la Montagne! Périissent les Girondins!” broke from their ranks, and revealed the secret of the day; they fixed the wavering by the assumption of the lead. It was soon discovered that the object was to present a petition, supported by an armed force, to the Assembly, demanding the proscription of the twenty-two leaders of the Gironde, the suppression of the Commission of Twelve, and the imposition of a fresh maximum on the price of bread. In the Faubourg St Antoine, the old centre of insurrections, the revolt assumed a more disorderly character. Pillage, immediate rapine, and disorder, could alone rouse its immense population. The commune excited their cupidity, by proposing to march to the Palais Royal, whose shopkeepers were the richest in Paris. “Arm yourselves!” exclaimed the agents of the municipality, “the counter-revolution is at hand; at the Palais Royal they are this moment crying ‘Vive le Roi!’ and trampling under foot the national colours; all its inhabitants are accomplices in the plot: march to the Palais Royal, and thence to the Convention.” But the inhabitants of that district were prepared for their defence; the gates of the palace were shut, and artillery placed in the avenues which led to them. When the immense forest of pikes began to debouch from the side of the faubourgs, the cannoneers stood with lighted matches to their pieces; and the wave of insurrection rolled aside to the more defenceless quarter of the legislature.¹

The Convention had early assembled at the sound of the tocsin in the hall of the Tuileries, which had now become their place of meeting, instead of the Salle du Manège; the chiefs of the Girondists, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of their friends, all repaired to the post of danger. They had passed the night assembled in the house of a common friend, armed, and resolved

CHAP.
XI.

1793.

56.

Vast forces
organised
in the fau-
bourgs.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxvii. 304,
320. Deux
Amis, x.
299, 302.
Lac. ii. 71,
72. Th. iv.
237, 247.
Mig. i. 265.

57.

Insurrection
of the 31st
May.

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XI.

1793.
May 31.

to sell their lives dearly ; but at daybreak they left their asylum, and took their seats in the Convention as the tocsin was sounding. Garat persisted in maintaining that there was nothing to fear ; that a *moral insurrection* alone was in contemplation. Pache, with hypocritical zeal, declared that he had doubled the guards of the Convention, and forbidden the cannon of alarm to be discharged. At that instant the sound of the artillery was heard ; the *générale* beat in all quarters, and the ceaseless roll, like the noise of distant thunder, showed that all Paris was in motion. “ I demand,” said Vergniaud, “ to know by whose authority the cannon of alarm have been sounded.” “ And I demand,” answered Thuriot, “ that the Commission of Twelve be instantly dissolved.” “ And I,” said Tallien, “ that the sword of the law strike the conspirators in the bosom of the Convention.” The Girondists insisted that Henriot, the commander-in-chief, should be called to the bar, for sounding the cannon of alarm without the authority of the Convention. “ If a combat commences,” said Vergniaud, “ whatever be its result, it will ruin the Republic. Let all the members swear to die at their posts.” They all took the oath ; in a few hours it was forgotten. “ Dissolve the Commission of Twelve,” said Danton, with his tremendous voice. “ The cannon has sounded. If you have any political discretion, you will take advantage of the public agitation to furnish you with an excuse for retracing your steps, and regaining your lost popularity. I address myself to those deputies who have some regard to the situation in which they are placed, and not to those insane mortals who listen to nothing but their passions. Hesitate no longer, therefore, to satisfy the people.” “ What people ? ” exclaimed Vergniaud. “ That people,” replied Danton, “ that immense body which is our advanced guard ; which hates alike every species of tyranny, and that base moderation which would speedily bring it back. Hasten then to satisfy them ; save them from the aristocrats ; save them from their own anger ; and if the

movement should continue when this is done, Paris will soon annihilate the factions which disturb its tranquillity." Vast bodies of petitioners soon began to defile through the Convention with menacing petitions. "We demand," said they, "the levy of a central Revolutionary army of Sans-culottes, who are to receive forty sous a-day each man; and demand a decree against the twenty-two members denounced by the sections of Paris, as well as the Committee of Twelve. We demand the price of bread to be fixed at three sous a pound in all the departments, and that the difference of price be made up by a forced tax on the rich."¹

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XI.

1793.

¹ Moniteur, May 31.
Mig. i. 266.
Th. iv. 234,
240, 243.
Lac. ii. 73.
Hist. Parl. xxvii. 343, 345.

The Tuileries were blockaded by the multitude: their presence, and the vociferous language of the petitioners who were successively admitted to the bar of the Assembly, encouraged the Jacobins to attempt the instant destruction of their opponents. Barère and the Committee of Public Salvation proposed, as a compromise, that the Commission of Twelve should be dissolved; Robespierre and his associates urged the immediate arrest of the Girondists. "Citizens," said he, "let us not lose our time in vain clamours and insignificant propositions. This day is perhaps the last of the struggles of freedom against tyranny." "Move then!" exclaimed Vergniaud. "Yes," replied Robespierre, "I move, and my motion is against you!—against you, who, after the revolution of August 10th, strove to lead to the scaffold the men who achieved it; against you, who have never ceased to urge measures fatal to the prosperity of Paris; against you, who endeavoured to save the tyrant; against you, who have conspired with Dumourier to overthrow the Republic; against you, who have unrelentingly attacked those whose heads Dumourier demanded; against you, whose criminal vengeance has provoked the cries of indignation, which you now allege as a crime against those who have suffered from it."² I move the immediate accusation of those who have conspired with Dumourier, and who are specified in

58.

The mob surrounds and assails the Convention.

² Hist. Parl. xxvii. 347, 349. Moniteur, May 31, pp. 663, 667. Mig. i. 268. Lac. ii. 73. Toul. iii. 413. Th. iv. 251, 252.

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1793.

the petitions of the people." The Convention, moved by the violence with which they were surrounded, deemed it the most prudent course to adopt the proposal of Barère and the Committee, for the suppression of the Commission, without the violent proposals of the Jacobins—a ruinous precedent of submission to popular violence, which soon brought about their total subjugation.

59.
The Jacobins organise a general insurrection.

But the revolutionists had no intention of stopping half-way in their career of violence. On the evening of the 31st, Billaud Varennes declared in the club of the Jacobins "that they had only half done their work ; it must be instantly completed, before the people have time to cool in their ardour. The movement in Paris will be turned against us in the departments : already couriers are sent off in all directions to rouse them. I demand that the sittings of the Jacobins be declared permanent. There must be no compromise with tyranny." "Be assured," said Bourdon de l'Oise, "that all those who wish to establish a burgher aristocracy will soon begin to reflect on their proceedings. Even Danton has lost his energy since the Commission of Twelve was dissolved. Already they ask, when urged to put themselves in insurrection, Against whom are we to revolt ? The aristocracy is destroyed, the clergy are destroyed. Who, then, are our oppressors ?" Lest any such reaction should take place, they resolved to keep the people continually in agitation. The 1st of June was devoted to completing the preparations ; in the evening, Marat himself mounted the steeple of the Hotel de Ville, and sounded the tocsin. The *général* beat through the whole night, and all Paris was under arms by daybreak on the morning of the 2d.¹

¹ Journ. des Jacobins, Juin 2, No. 429, Th. iv. 258, 259. Toul. iii. 411.

60.
Last dinner of the Girondists together, June 1.

On the preceding day, being the last that they were to meet in freedom in this world, the Girondists dined together to deliberate on the means of defence which yet remained in the desperate state of their fortunes. Their opinions, as usual, were much divided. Some thought that they should remain firm at their posts, and die on

their curule chairs, defending to the last extremity the sacred character with which they were invested. Pétion, Buzot, and Gensonné, supported that mournful and unanimous resolution. Barbaroux, consulting only his impetuous courage, was desirous to brave his enemies by his presence in the Convention. Others, among whom was Louvet, strenuously maintained that they should instantly abandon the Convention, where their deliberations were no longer free, and the majority were intimidated by the daggers of the Jacobins, and retire each into his own department, to return to Paris with such a force as should avenge the cause of the national representation. The deliberation was still going forward, when the clang of the tocsin and the rolling of the drums warned them that the insurrection had commenced; and they broke up without having come to any determination.¹

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XI.

1793.

¹Th. iv. 260.
Buzot, 74,
50. Garat,
128.

At eight o'clock, Henriot put himself at the head of the immense columns of armed men assembled round the Hotel de Ville, presented himself before the council of the municipality, and declared, in the name of the insurgent people, that they would not lay down their arms till they had obtained the arrest of the obnoxious deputies. The forces assembled on this occasion were most formidable. One hundred and sixty pieces of cannon, with tumbrils, and waggons of balls complete, furnaces to heat them red-hot, lighted matches, and drawn swords in the hands of the gunners, resembled rather the preparations for the siege of a powerful fortress than demonstrations against a pacific legislature. In addition to this, several battalions, who had marched that morning for la Vendée, received counter-orders, and re-entered Paris in a state of extreme irritation. They were instantly supplied with assignats, worth five francs each, and ranged themselves round Henriot, ready to execute his commands, even against the Convention.² The whole battalions of the national guard which were suspected of leaning to the Convention were removed to distant parts of the city, so that the legislature

61.
Attack on
the Conven-
tion.
June 2.² Deux
Anis, x.
317, 318.
Mig. i. 269.
Toul. iii.
415, 424.
Th. iv. 261,
262. Hist.
Parl. xxvii.
390, 391.

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1793.

was surrounded only by its most inveterate enemies. After haranguing them in the Place de Grève, Henriot proceeded to the other insurgents, put himself at their head, and marched to the Carrousel. By ten o'clock the whole of the avenues to the Tuileries were blockaded by dense columns and artillery ; and eighty thousand armed men surrounded the defenceless representatives of the people.

62.
Vehement
debate in the
Assembly.

Few only of the proscribed deputies were present at this meeting. The intrepid Lanjuinais was among the number ; from the tribune he drew a picture, in true and frightful colours, of the state of the Assembly, deliberating for three days under the poniards of assassins, threatened without by a furious multitude, domineered over within by a faction which wielded at will the violence of that multitude, descending from degradation to degradation, rewarded for its condescension with arrogance, for its submission by outrage. "As long as I am permitted to raise my voice in this place," said he, "I will never suffer the national representation to be degraded in my person. Hitherto you have done nothing ; you have only suffered ; you have sanctioned everything required of you. An insurrection assembles, and names a committee to organise a revolt, with a commander of the armed force to direct it ; and you tolerate the insurrection, the committee, the commander." At these words, the cries of the Mountain drowned his voice, and the Jacobins rushed forward to drag him from the tribune : but he held fast, and the president at length succeeded in restoring silence. "I demand," he concluded, "that all the revolutionary authorities of Paris be instantly dissolved ; that everything done during the last three days be annulled ; that all who arrogate to themselves an illegal authority be declared out of the pale of the law." He had hardly concluded when the insurgent petitioners entered, and demanded his own arrest, and that of the other Girondists. Their

language was brief and decisive. "The citizens of Paris," said they, "have been four days under arms ; for four days they have demanded from their mandatories redress of their rights so scandalously violated ; and for four days their mandatories have done nothing to satisfy them. The conspirators must instantly be placed under arrest : you must forthwith save the people, or they will take their safety into their own hands."—"Save the people!" exclaimed the Jacobins ; "save your colleagues, by agreeing to their provisional arrest." Barère and the neutral party urged the proscribed deputies to have the generosity to give in their resignations, in order to tranquillise the public mind. Isnard, Lanthenas, and others, complied with the request ; Lanjuinais positively refused. "Hitherto," said he, "I have shown some courage ; I shall not fail at the last extremity. You need not expect from me either suspension or resignation." Being violently interrupted by the left, he added—"When the ancients prepared a sacrifice, they crowned the victim with flowers and garlands when they conducted him to the altar ; the priest sacrificed him, but added not insult or injury. But you, more cruel than they, commit outrages on the victim who is making no efforts to avert his fate." "I have sworn to die at my post," said Barbaroux ; "I shall keep my oath. Bend, if you please, before the municipality, you who refused to arrest its wickedness ; or rather imitate us, whom its fury immediately demands. Wait, and brave its fury. You may compel me to sink under its daggers : you shall not make me fall at its feet."¹

CHAP.
XI.
1793.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxvii. 383,
397. Moni-
teur, 3d
June. Mig.
i. 270, 271.
Lac. ii. 72,
73. Toul.
iii. 430, 434.
Th. iv. 264,
265.

While the Assembly was in the utmost agitation, and swayed alternately by terror and admiration, Lacroix, an intimate friend of Danton's, entered with a haggard air, and announced that he had been stopped at the gate, and that the Convention was imprisoned within its walls. The secret of the revolt became now evident ; it was not conducted by Danton and the Mountain, but by

63.

They move out of the hall, but are driven back by the armed multitude.

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Robespierre, Marat, and the municipality. "We must instantly avenge," said Danton, "this outrage on the national representation. Let us go forth, and awe the rebels by the majesty of the legislature." Headed by its president, the Convention set out, and moved in a body, with the signs of distress, to the principal gate leading to the Place de Carrousel. They were there met by Henriot on horseback, sword in hand, at the head of the most devoted battalions of the faubourgs. "What do the people demand?" said the president, Héroult de Séchelles; "the Convention is occupied with nothing but their welfare."—"Héroult," replied Henriot, "the people are not to be deceived with fine words: they demand that the twenty-four culpable deputies be given up." "Demand rather that we should all be given up!" exclaimed those who surrounded the president. "Cannoneers, to your pieces!" replied Henriot. Two guns, charged with grape-shot, were pointed against the members of the Convention, who involuntarily fell back; and after in vain attempting to find the means of escape at the other gates of the garden, returned in dismay to the Hall. Marat followed them, at the head of a body of brigands,—“I order you, in the name of the people, to enter, to deliberate, and to obey.”¹*

¹ Hist. Parl. xxvii. 400, 401. Deux Amis, x. 319, 321. Lac. ii. 76, 77. Mig. i. 263, 272. Th. iv. 263, 270.

61.
The thirty Girondists are given up and imprisoned.

When the members were seated, Couthon rose. "You have now had convincing evidence," said he, "that the Convention is *perfectly free*. The indignation of the people is only pointed against certain unworthy members: we are surrounded by their homage and affection: let us obey alike our own conscience and their wishes. I propose that Lanjuinais, Vergniaud, Sillery, Gensonné, Le Hardi, Guadet, Pétion, Brissot, Boileau, Birotteau, Valazé, Gomaire, Bertrand, Gardien, Kervélegan, Mollevaut, Bergoing, Barbaroux, Lydon, Buzot, La Source,

* So sensible were the Revolutionists themselves of the violence done on this occasion to the Convention, that no mention is made of this event in the *Moniteur*.— See *Moniteur*, 4 Juin 1793, p. 671.

Rabaut St Etienne, Salles, Chambon, Gorsas, Grange-neuve, le Sage, Vigée, Louvet, and Henri Larivière, be immediately put under arrest." With the dagger at their throats, the Convention passed the decree : a large body had the courage to protest against the violence, and refuse to vote. This suicidal measure was carried wholly by the voters of the Mountain, and a few adherents : the great majority refused to have any share in it. The multitude gave tumultuous cheers, and dispersed : their victory was complete ; the municipality of Paris had overthrown the National Assembly.¹

CHAP.
XI.

1793.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxvii. 401.
Moniteur,
4th June,
p. 661. Mig.
i. 272, 273.
Lac. ii. 78,
79. Th. iv.
272.

The political career of the Girondists was terminated by this day ; thenceforward they were known only as individuals, by their heroic conduct in adversity and death. Their strife with the Jacobins was a long struggle between two classes, which invariably succeed each other in the lead of revolutionary convulsions. The rash and reckless, but able and generous party, which trusted to the force of reason in popular assemblies, perished because they strove to arrest the torrent they had let loose, to avenge the massacres of September, avoid the execution of the King, resist the institution of the Revolutionary Tribunal, and of the Committee of Public Salvation. With the excitement of more vehement passions, with the approach of more pressing dangers, with the advent of times when moderation seemed a crime, they perished. Thereafter, when every legal form was violated, every appeal against violence stifled by the imprisonment of the Girondists, democratic despotism marched on in its career without an obstacle ; and the terrible dictatorship, composed of the Committee of Public Salvation and the Revolutionary Tribunal, was established in resistless sovereignty. The proscribed members were at first put under arrest in their own houses. Several found the means of escape before the order for their imprisonment was issued. Barbaroux, Pétion, Lanjuinais, and Henri Larivière, arrived at Caen,

65.
Termination
of the
political
power of
the Girondists.

CHAP.
XI.

1793.

1 Th. iv.
275, 276.
Deux Amis,
x. 325, 328.

in Normandy, where a feeble attempt at resistance to the usurped authority of the Parisian mob was made, which speedily yielded to the efforts of the Jacobin emissaries. Louvet escaped to Bordeaux, and subsequently wandered for months among the forests and caverns of the Jura, where he employed his hours of solitude in composing the able memoirs of his life.¹

66.
Their trial
and condem-
nation.

Vergniaud, Guadet, Brissot, and the other leaders, were soon afterwards arrested in different places, and thrown into prison, from whence, after a painful interval, they were conducted to the scaffold. On the walls of the cell in the prison of the Carmes in the Rue Vaugirard, in which he was confined, were found written with blood, in Vergniaud's handwriting, the words—

“Potius mori quam fœdari.”*

The prison itself bore over its entrance the inscription, “La Liberté, l’Egalité, ou la Mort.” The same gloomy abode now contained the Girondists which had formerly witnessed the sorrows of men they had overthrown, and afterwards resounded with the wail of their prosecutors. The walls of their cells bore ample testimony to the heroic feelings with which they were animated.† They were detained in confinement for above four months before being brought to trial, in order to secure the power

* “Rather die than be disgraced.”

† In the handwriting of these eloquent and unhappy men were found the following, among many other inscriptions :

“Quand il n’a pu sauver la liberté de Rome,
Caton est libre encore, et sait mourir en homme.”

“Dignum certe Deo spectaculum fortem
Virum colluctantem cum calamitate.”

“Cui virtus non deest
Nunquam omnino miser.”

“Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori.”

“Non omnis moriar.”

“Summum credo nefas animam præferre pudori.”

If the Girondists had known how to live, as they proved they knew how to die, they might have averted or arrested the whole horrors of the Revolution.

See LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, vii. 16, 17.

of the Jacobin faction before they brought the illustrious leaders of the opposite party, so long the idols of the people, to trial and death. The prisoners during this interval endured the greatest privations: it was only from the aid of their relatives they could procure even a change of linen. But their courage never forsook them. A nephew of Vergniaud having been introduced into his cell, with some little aid, the prisoner took him on his knee. "My child," said he, "don't be afraid: look at me, and remember my visage when you are a man. You will remember you have seen Vergniaud, the founder of the republic, in the most honourable period of his life, when he was suffering the persecution of the wicked, and preparing to die for freemen." Fauchet now bewailed in sincere terms his abandonment of the faith of his youth, and expressed his conviction that it alone furnished an antidote to the evils of life.* When brought to trial, the people were so prejudiced, and the power of their enemies so confirmed, that their conviction was secure ere they were brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. Their trial and condemnation took place in the end of October before that court. The Convention passed a decree authorising their trial; the indictment against them was general, but its specific charges affected only five or six of the accused. They insisted upon the right of separate defence; the Jacobins, the Committee of Public Salvation, and the Convention, held this demand decisive evidence of a new conspiracy.¹ To obviate its supposed danger, and guard against the effect of the well-known

CHAP.
XI.
1793.

Oct. 19.

¹ Toul. iv.
114. Th.
iv. 389.
Mig. ii. 293.
Lac. ii. 78,
99. Louv.
p. 1. Lam.
Hist. des
Gir. vii. 12,
17, 20.

* "Fauchet se frappait la poitrine devant ses collègues. Il s'accusait avec un repentir sincère, mais ferme, d'avoir abandonné la foi de sa jeunesse. Il démontrait que la religion seule pouvait guider les pas de la liberté. Il se rejouissait de donner à sa mort prochaine le caractère d'un double martyr, celui du prêtre qui se repent, et celui du républicain qui persévère. Sillery se taisait, trouvant dans ses moments suprêmes le silence plus digne que la plainte. Il revenait, comme Fauchet, aux croyances et aux pratiques religieuses. Tous deux se separaient souvent de leurs collègues pour aller s'entretenir à l'écart avec un vénérable prêtre, enfermé pour sa foi."—LAMARTINE, *Histoire des Girondins*, vii. 21, 22.

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XI.

1793.

eloquence of the accused, which had already strongly moved the audience, the Revolutionary Tribunal, after the trial had proceeded some days, obtained from the Convention a decree, authorising them, when any trial had lasted three days, to ask the jury if their minds were made up as to the guilt of the accused, and if they said they were, to convict and pass sentence, *whether they had been heard in their defence or not*.*

67.
Grounds of
charge
against the
Girondists.
1 Ante, c. xi.
§ 40.

The grounds of the accusation were of the most contemptible kind, and consisted of the charges brought against them by Robespierre, which have been already given.¹ Chaumette recounted all the struggles of the municipality with the *Côté Droit*, without adding a single fact that could inculcate the accused : the wretch Hébert narrated the particulars of his arrest by the Commission of Twelve, and alleged that Roland had endeavoured to corrupt the public writers, by offering to buy up his obscene journal, the *Père Duchesne* : Destournelle deponed that the accused had exerted themselves to crush the municipality, declared against the massacres in the prisons, and laboured to institute a departmental guard. Chabot was the most virulent of the witnesses against them : he ascribed to them a Machiavelian policy throughout all the Revolution ; accused them of endeavouring to convert everything to their own profit, and even permitting the

* On the fifth day of the trial, the Revolutionary Tribunal addressed to the Convention the following letter :—" Five days have already been consumed, and nine witnesses only have been examined ; each in making his deposition thinks it necessary to give a history of the whole Revolution. The loquacity of the accused renders the discussions long between them and the witnesses. The trial, therefore, will never be finished. But why, we ask, *have any witnesses at all* ! The Convention, the whole Republic, are accusers in this case ; the proofs of the crimes of the accused are evident. Every one has already in his conscience a conviction of their guilt. But the Tribunal can do nothing of itself ; it must follow the law. It is for the Convention itself to sweep away the formalities which trammel our proceedings." Upon this the Convention, on the motion of Robespierre, passed the following resolution, which was precisely in terms of a petition presented the same day by the Jacobin Club to the Convention : " Après trois jours de débats, le président du Tribunal Révolutionnaire demandera aux jurés si leur conscience est suffisamment éclairée ; s'ils répondent négativement, le procès sera continué jusqu'à ce qu'ils

massacres of September, in order to cut off some of their enemies among the victims. The prosecution lasted nine days. At the end of that time, the jury declared themselves convinced; the eloquence of Vergniaud, the vehemence of Brissot, had pleaded in vain. The court then read to the accused the decree of the Convention, empowering them *to terminate the proceedings as soon as the jury had declared their minds made up*; they saw upon this that their fate was determined, as they were to be condemned without being heard in their defence.* They all rose, and by loud expressions of indignation drowned the voice of the president, who read their sentence. Valazé stabbed himself with a poniard, and perished in the presence of the court, who immediately ordered that his dead body should be borne on a car to the place of execution, and beheaded with the other prisoners. La Source exclaimed—"I die at a time when the people have lost their reason: you will die as soon as they recover it." The other prisoners embraced each other, and exclaimed, "Vive la République!" The audience, though chiefly composed of the assassins of the 2d September, was melted to tears.¹

The anxiety of his friends had provided Vergniaud with a certain and speedy poison. He refused to make use of it, and threw it away the night before his execution, in order that he might accompany his friends to the

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¹ Bull. du Trib. Rév. No. 62, p. 246-255. Hist. Parl. xxx. 110, 123. Toul. iv. 114. Lac. ii. 99. Mig. ii. 294. Th. v. 389, 390, 391. Lam. Hist. des Gir. vii. 45.

68.

Their last repast. Oct. 30.

déclarent qu'ils sont en état de prononcer."—*Moniteur*, 30 Oct. 1793. The decree was in these terms, and the original was found in *Robespierre's own handwriting* among his papers after his death:—"S'il arrive que le jugement d'une affaire portée au Tribunal Révolutionnaire ait été prolongé trois jours, le président ouvrira la séance suivante en demandant aux jurés si leur conscience est suffisamment éclairée. Si les jurés répondent 'Oui,' il sera procédé *sur-le-champ* au jugement. Le président ne souffrira aucune espèce d'interpellation ni d'incident contraire aux dispositions de la présente."—*Papiers Inédits trouvés chez ROBESPIERRE*, ii. 4.

* "L'accusateur public requiert la lecture de la loi sur l'accélération des jugemens criminels. Cette lecture est faite. Le Tribunal ordonne la transcription de la loi sur ses registres. Le Président—'Citoyens purs, en vertu de la loi dont vous venez d'entendre la lecture, je demande si votre conscience est suffisamment éclairée.' Les jurés se retirent pour délibérer."—*Bulletin du Tribunal Révolutionnaire*, No. 62, p. 246.

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scaffold. The eloquence of this highly-gifted man, which poured forth the night before his execution, on the expiring liberty of France, in strains of unprecedented splendour, entranced even the melancholy inmates of the prison. On this occasion the Girondists, like the Christian martyrs at Rome, were permitted to take their last repast together. By a strange feeling, but copied from the example of antiquity on such occasions, the table was decked out in the principal apartment of the prison with unusual care. The choicest fruits and flowers of autumn adorned the board: the finest wines circulated among the friends who were to taste of the fruit of the vine no more. Vergniaud presided. "My friends," said he, "in trying to engraft the tree, we have killed it. It was too old; Robespierre cuts it down. Will he be more fortunate than we? No! The soil is too light here to nourish the roots of civil liberty; the people are too infantine to govern themselves: they will return to their king, as a child returns to its playthings. We mistook our time in being born, and dying for the liberty of the world; we thought we were at Rome, and we were at Paris. But revolutions are like the misfortunes which blanch in a night the hair of the sufferer: they quickly ripen a people. The blood in our veins is warm enough to enrich the soil of the Republic. Let us not bear the future with us, but leave hope to the people in exchange for the death which they have given us. Let us die then, if not with confidence, at least with hope: our consciences are our witnesses in the great trial; our Judge the Eternal. Death is only the most important event of life, because it is the passage to a superior state of being. Were it not so, man would be greater than God; for he would have conceived what his Creator could not execute. No! Vergniaud is not greater than God, but God is more just than Vergniaud, and He will raise him to-morrow on the scaffold, only to justify him to future ages."¹ "Christ," said Sillery, "dying on the scaf-

¹ Lam. Hist. des Gir. vii. 52, 53, 26, 47.

fold was, like us, a divine witness. His religion, which we have confounded with tyranny, was not oppression, but deliverance. He was the Girondist of Immortality."

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The illustrious prisoners were conducted, on the 31st October, to the place of execution. They marched together with a firm step, singing the Revolutionary song, which they applied by a slight change to their own situation,—

69.
Their heroic
death.
Oct. 31.

"Allons, enfans de la patrie !
Le jour de gloire est arrivé ;
Contre nous de la tyrannie
Le couteau sanglant est levé."

Never since the execution of Lally, in 1766, had there been seen such a crowd as now assembled in the Place Louis XV. to witness their execution. The quays, the gardens of the Tuileries, the Pont de la Concorde, and all the windows from thence to the Conciergerie, from which they were brought, were crowded with spectators. Brissot and Fauchet alone wore a sad and pensive expression. When they arrived at the place of execution at one o'clock in the afternoon, they mutually embraced, exclaiming, "Vive la République !" Sillery ascended first ; he bowed with a grave air to the people, and received with unshrinking firmness the fatal stroke. Le Hardi exclaimed "Vive la République !" as he was bound to the plank, so loud as to be heard over the whole Place. The execution of the whole lasted thirty-eight minutes, during which the condemned, awaiting their turn, as their friends were successively beheaded, never ceased chanting with firm voices an air, the burden of which was—"rather death than slavery." A voice was withdrawn from the swell with every fall of the axe ; their numbers were thinned at the foot of the guillotine. One voice alone continued to chant the Marseillaise to the very end : it was that of Vergniaud, who, as their leader, was chosen to suffer last. He could hardly be said to die

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¹ Lam. Hist.
des Gir.
vii. 59.
Bull. du
Trib. Rév.
No. 64.
Lac. ii. 99,
100. Th.
v. 392.
Mig. ii. 294.
Touliv. 115.
Riouffe, 51,
52. Hist.
Parl. xxx.
122, 123.
Biog. Univ.
xlviii. 206,
209. (Verg-
niaud.)

by the executioner's hand ; he swooned, before the blade fell, from the vehemence of his enthusiasm. They all died with the resolution of Romans, chanting with their last breath the hymn of the Revolution. One single grave received their united remains ; it was beside that in which had been laid the uncoffined body of their royal victim Louis XVI. Some years after, in searching the archives of the parish of the Madeleine for documents connected with the victims of the Revolution, an order on the treasury was found for the expenses of the burial of the twenty deputies of the Gironde ; it was only 210 francs ! So humble were the obsequies of the first founders of the Republic.^{1*}

70.

Execution
of Dufocce
and Rabaut
St Etienne.

A young man, named Girey Dufocce, editor of the *Patriote Français*, was brought to the bar of the Revolutionary Tribunal. The president asked if he had been a friend of Brissot. "I had that happiness."—"What is your opinion of him?"—"That he lived like Aristides and died like Sidney!" was the intrepid answer. He was forthwith sent to the scaffold, where he perished with the firmness of his departed friend. Rabaut St Etienne, one of the most enlightened and virtuous of the proscribed deputies, had escaped soon after the 2d June from Paris. Tired of wandering through the provinces, he returned to the capital, and lived concealed in the house of one of those faithful friends of whom the Revolution produced so many examples. His wife, influenced by the most tender attachment, incessantly watched over his safety. In the street, one day, she met an acquaintance, a Jacobin, who assured her of his interest in her husband, and professed his desire to give him an asylum in his own house. Rabaut being informed of the circumstance, and desirous of saving his generous host from further danger, informed the Jacobin of his place of retreat,² and assigned an hour of the night for him to come and remove him

² Bull. du
Trib. Rév.
No. 97, p.
387. Lac.
ii. 100.
Deux Amis,
xii. 27, 28.

* "Pour 22 députés de la Gironde. Les bières, 142 francs ; frais d'inhumation, 68 : total, 210."—LAMARTINE, *Hist. des Girondins*, vii. 58, 59.

from it. The perfidious wretch came accompanied by gendarmes, who dragged their victim, with his friendly host and hostess, to the Revolutionary Tribunal, whence they were sent to the scaffold. In despair at having been the instrument, however innocently, of such treachery, his wife, in the flower of youth and beauty, put herself to death.

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1793.

Madame Roland was the next victim. This heroic woman had been early involved in the proscription of the Girondists, of whom her splendid talents had almost rendered her the head. She was afterwards confined among the common prostitutes of Paris, in the prison of St Pelagie ; and it was only the pity of the jailors which there, at length, procured for her a separate bed. While confined in the prison of the Abbaye, she employed the tedious months of captivity in composing the Memoirs which so well illustrate her eventful life. With a firm hand she traced, in that gloomy abode, the joyous as well as the melancholy periods of her existence ; the brilliant dreams and ardent patriotism of her youth ; the stormy and eventful scenes of her maturer years ; the horrors and anguish of her latest days. While suffering under the fanaticism of the people, when about to die under the violence of the mob, she never abandoned the principles of her youth, nor regretted her martyrdom in the cause of freedom. If the thoughts of her daughter and her husband sometimes melted her to tears, she regained her firmness on every important occasion. In the solitude of prison she had leisure to reflect on the stormy political career in which she had borne so distinguished a part, and lamented the delusions in which she had so long been involved. Her friends had provided her with the means of escape ; but she refused to avail herself of them. During the long and dreary period of her captivity, she studied Tacitus incessantly. "I cannot sleep," said she, "without reading some of his writings: *we seem to see things in the same light.*" At another time

71.
Imprison-
ment of
Madame
Roland.

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XI.

1793.

she said—"The present government is a kind of monster, of which the action and the forms are equally revolting : it destroys all it touches, and devours itself." On the day of the execution of the Girondists, she was transferred to the Conciergerie, and placed in a cell adjoining that lately occupied by the Queen. The beautiful and ambitious leader of the Girondists was brought by the Revolution to the same bourne as her royal victim. There she was strictly watched, in a wretched damp apartment, with a straw mattress alone for a bed. Though she had opium secreted, she refused to make use of it, alleging that she would not shrink from the fate of her friends, and that her death would be of service to the world. Her memoirs evince unbroken serenity of mind, though she was frequently interrupted in their composition by the cries of those whom the executioners were dragging from the adjoining cells to the scaffold.¹

¹Biog. Univ.
xxxviii.
464, 465.
Rioulfe, 56,
57. Lac.
ii. 100.
Roland, i.
passim, and
97.

72.

Her conduct at her
trial.
8th Nov.

On the day of her trial she was dressed with scrupulous care in white. Her fine black hair fell in profuse curls to her waist ; but the display of its beauty was owing to her jailors, who had deprived her of all means of dressing it. She chose that colour for her dress as emblematic of the purity of her mind. Her advocate, M. Chaveau Lagarde, visited her to receive her last instructions. Drawing a ring from her finger, she said—"To-morrow I shall be no more ; I know well the fate which awaits me ; your kind assistance could be of no avail ; it would endanger you without saving me. Do not, therefore, I pray you, come to the tribunal ; but accept this as the last testimony of my regard." Her defence, composed by herself the night before the trial, is one of the most eloquent and touching monuments of the Revolution. Her answers to the interrogatories of the judges, the dignity of her manner, the beauty of her figure, melted even the revolutionary audience with pity. They had the barbarity to ask her questions reflecting on her honour : the unworthy insult brought tears to her eyes, but did not disturb

her serenity of demeanour. Finding they could implicate her in no other way, the president asked her if she was acquainted with the place of her husband's retreat. She replied, that "whether she knew it or not she would not reveal it, and that there was no law by which she was obliged, in a court of justice, to violate the strongest feelings of nature." Upon this she was immediately condemned. When the reading of her sentence was concluded, she rose and said—"You judge me worthy to share the fate of the great men whom you have assassinated. I shall endeavour to imitate their firmness on the scaffold." She regained her prison with an elastic step and beaming eye; and on entering the wicket, made, with a joyous air, a sign to show she was to be beheaded. Her whole soul appeared absorbed in the heroic feelings with which she was animated.¹

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XI.
1793.

¹ Roland, i. 40, 41, 43; ii. 439, App. Q. p. 425. Riouffe, 57. Biog. Univ. xxxviii. 165. Bull. du Trib. Rév. No. 76, pp. 301, 302.

She was conveyed to the scaffold in the same car with a man of the name of Lemarche, condemned for forging assignats, whose firmness was not equal to her own. While passing along the streets, her whole anxiety appeared to be to support his courage. She did this with so much simplicity and effect, that she frequently brought a smile on the lips which were about to perish.* At the place of execution she bowed before the gigantic statue of Liberty, and pronounced the memorable words—"O Liberty, how many crimes are committed in thy name!" When they arrived at the foot of the scaffold, she had the generosity to renounce, in favour of her companion, the privilege of being first executed. "Ascend first," said she: "let me at least spare you the pain of seeing my blood flow."² Turning to the executioner, she

73.
Her heroic death.

² Bull. du Trib. Rév. No. 76, p. 301. Biog. Univ. xxxviii. 463, 464. Roland, i. 43, 44. Lac. x. 278.

* "Mira che l'una tace e l'altro geme,
E piu vigor mostra il men forte sesso.
Pianger lui vede in guisa d'uom cui preme
Pieta, non doglia, o duol non di se stesso;
E tacer lei cogli occhi al ciel si fisa
Ch'anzi 'l morir par di quaggiu divisa."

TASSO, *Gerus. Liber*. ii. 42.

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XI.

1793.

asked if he would consent to that arrangement; he replied, "That his orders were that she should die the first."—"You cannot," said she with a smile, "I am sure, refuse a woman her last request?" Undismayed by the spectacle which immediately ensued, she calmly bent her head under the guillotine, and perished with the serenity she had evinced ever since her imprisonment.

74.
Death of M.
Roland.

Madame Roland had predicted that her husband would not long survive her. Her prophecy was speedily fulfilled. A few days afterwards he was found dead on the road between Paris and Rouen; he had stabbed himself in that locality that he might not, by the situation in which his body was found, betray the generous friends who had sheltered him in his misfortunes. In his pocket was found a letter, in these terms—"Whoever you are, O passenger! who discover my body, respect the remains of the unfortunate. They are those of a man who consecrated his whole life to be useful to his country; who died as he had lived, virtuous and unsullied. May my fellow-citizens embrace more humane sentiments: not fear, but indignation, made me quit my retreat when I heard of the murder of my wife. I loathed a world stained with so many crimes." The other chiefs of the party, dispersed in the provinces of France, underwent innumerable dangers, and some of them made escapes more wonderful even than those which romance has figured. Condorcet swallowed opium and perished. He had long been concealed in the house of a female friend, who sheltered him with generous devotion: but when the sun shone forth in the next spring, he was so captivated by the beauty of nature, that he went forth to the fields, and was apprehended. He was discovered in disguise by the fineness of his linen, and immediately swallowed the poison he carried with him. Louvet owed his salvation to the fidelity of female attachment. Buzot stabbed himself when he heard of Madame Roland's execution;

the passion which had been concealed in life appeared in death. But the wound was not mortal, and he was reserved for a more melancholy fate. Barbaroux, Buzot, Pétion, and Valazé, were long concealed at St Emilion, in a cavern, by a sister of Guadet. But the Jacobins at length got trace of their retreat, and they were obliged to leave it. Guadet himself was soon discovered, and perished by the guillotine at Bordeaux, as did the ardent and impetuous Barbaroux, on the 25th June 1794. Pétion and Buzot were found in a field near the Garonne half devoured by wolves, which in those days of war had descended from the mountains to share in the spoils of humanity. A few only escaped the anxious search of the Jacobins; their memoirs evince a curious proof of the indignation of enthusiastic but virtuous minds at the triumph of guilty ambition.¹

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1793.

¹ Lam. Hist. des Gir. vii. 252, 253. Hist. Parl. xxviii. 48. Roland, i. 45, 46. Lac. x. 273. Mémoires de Buzot, Louvet, and Barbaroux, *passim*, and Lac. x. 280. Biog. Univ. iii. 331; and xxxiii. 474. (Barbaroux and Pétion.)

While these events were in progress, the arm of female enthusiasm arrested the course of one of the tyrants; and her deed, though it occurred a few weeks after their fall, was the direct consequence of the overthrow of the Girondists. Charlotte Corday, a native of Rouen, at the age of five-and-twenty, was animated by a heroism and devotion above her sex. A grand-daughter of the great Corneille, she was animated with his lofty spirit. This is not surprising—poetry, heroism, and love are sisters of each other: they spring from the same exalted sentiments. Gifted with a beautiful form and a serene temper, she deemed the occupations and ordinary ambition of women beneath her serious regard; possessed of more than masculine courage, she had lost nothing of female delicacy. One only passion, the love of liberty, concentrated the ardent aspirations of her mind. Her enthusiasm was awakened to the highest degree by the arrival of the proscribed Girondists at Rouen after their overthrow at Paris; all the romantic visions of her youth seemed blighted by the bloody usurpation of the ruling faction at Paris. Marat, the instigator of all the atro-

75.

Charlotte
Corday.
Her character.

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XI.

1793.

¹ Deux
Amis, x.
368. Biog.
Univ. ix.
569. (Cor-
day.) Lac.
ii. 80. Th.
v. 77, 78.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir.

cities, she imagined to be their leader. He was considered in the provinces, from his numerous journals, which had long stimulated to massacre and blood, as the demon of the Revolution. If he could be removed, no obstacle appeared to remain to the reign of justice and equality, to the commencement of the happiness of France. In the heroic spirit of female devotion, she resolved to sacrifice her life to this inestimable object.¹*

76.
She resolves
to assassinate Marat,
and kills
him.
July 13.

Having taken her resolution, she regained all her wonted cheerfulness of manner, which the public calamities had much impaired. Deceived by the appearance of joy which she exhibited, her relations allowed her to set off on some trifling commissions to Paris. A young man in the national guard of Rouen, named Franquelin, was deeply attached to her. She gave him, before departing, her portrait, which he preserved with religious care, with her letters. He died of grief soon after her melancholy fate, having previously directed that her miniature and letters should be buried with him, which was accordingly done. "I weep," said she to a friend, "the woes of my country, of my relations, of you. So long as Marat lives, no one can be sure of his life." In an old Bible in her possession she had marked the passage,—“The Lord made choice of Judith to deliver Israel.” In the public conveyance she was chiefly distinguished by the amiable playfulness of her demeanour, uninterrupted even by the savage conversation of some Jacobins who were present.†

* “Ergo ego germanam, fratremque, patremque, deosque,
Et natale solum, fatis ablata relinquam.
Maximus intra me Deus est : non magna relinquam,
Magna sequar.” OVID, *Metam.* vii. 50–54.

† “S’ode l’ammunzio intanto, e che s’appresta
Miserabile strage al popol loro,
A lei che generosa, è quanto onesta,
Viene in pensier come salvar costoro.
Move fortezza il gran pensier : l’arresta
Poi la vergogna e l’ virginal decoro :
Vince fortezza, anzi s’accorda, e face
Se vergognosa, e la vergogna audace.

The first day of her arrival at Paris was employed in executing her commissions : on the second she purchased a knife at the Palais Royal, to plunge into the bosom of the tyrant. On the third day, she with difficulty obtained an entrance to Marat. She was ushered into a room adjoining the cabinet, where he lay in a covered bath. He eagerly inquired after the proscribed deputies at Caen. Being told their names—"They shall soon meet with the punishment they deserve," said Marat. "Yours is at hand!" exclaimed she, and stabbed him to the heart. He uttered a loud shriek and expired. The blood flowed so profusely from the wound, that he seemed to expire in a bath of gore. Charlotte Corday remained motionless in the apartment, and was seized and conducted to prison.¹

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XI.

1793.

¹ Prudhom.
Rév. de
Paris, No.
209, p. 684.
Deux Amis,
x. 369, 371.
Lac. ii. 80,
81. Mig. ii.
279. Th.
v. 80, 81.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. vi.
210, 213.

When in confinement, the cheerfulness and serenity of her manner astonished the jailers, who, though they watched her day and night, could discern no change in the tranquillity which she evinced. On the same day she wrote to Barbaroux at Caen, in terms singularly descriptive of her state of mind.* This letter was afterwards made the chief ground of his condemnation. Before leaving home, she had given away all her books except a volume of Plutarch, which she took with her. On the day of her trial, her extraordinary beauty and innocence of manner excited universal interest. She interrupted the witnesses, who were beginning to prove

77.

Her trial
and con-
demnation.

La vergine tra 'l vulgo uscì soletta :
Non copri sue bellezze, e non l'espose :
Raccolse gli occhi, ando nel vel ristretta,
Con ischive maniere e generose.
Non sai ben dir se adorna o se negletta,
Se caso od arte il bel volto compose :
Di natura, d'amor, de' cieli amici,
Le negligenze sue sono artifizii.
Mirata da ciascun, passa e non mira
L'altra donna."

Tasso, *Gerus. Liber.* ii. 17, 18.

There is nothing grand, generous, or pathetic in human character which the poets had prefigured, that the French Revolution has not realised.

" Nous sommes si bons républicains à Paris, l'on ne conçoit pas comment

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the death of the deceased : “ These formalities are unnecessary : I killed Marat ! ” — “ What tempted you to commit the murder ? ” “ His own crimes. ” — “ What do you mean by his crimes ? ” “ The misfortunes which he has inflicted on France since the Revolution, and which he was preparing to increase. ” — “ Who are your associates ? ” “ I have none : I alone conceived the idea. ” — “ What did you propose to yourself by putting Marat to death ? ” “ To stop the anarchy of France. I have slain one man to save a hundred thousand—a wretch, to preserve the innocent—a savage monster, to give repose to my country. I was a republican before the Revolution, and I have never failed in energy. ” — “ What do you understand by energy ? ” asked the president. “ The sentiment which animates those who, disdaining the consideration of their own safety, sacrifice themselves for the sake of their country. ” During the interrogatory, she observed an artist was taking a sketch of her profile. She turned her head so as to give him a proper view, and remained so steady, that he completed it in a few minutes. She requested him to send a few copies to her family. Upon hearing her sentence, she gave a joyful exclamation, and, with a radiant countenance, handed to the president two letters, one addressed to Barbaroux, the other to her father. In the latter, she said — “ Pardon me, my dear papa, for having disposed of my life without your per-

une femme inutile, dont la plus longue vie ne serait bonne à rien, peut se sacrifier de sang froid pour sauver son pays. *Je jouis délicieusement de la paix depuis deux jours ; le bonheur de ma patrie fait le mien. Je suis on ne peut mieux dans ma prison : les concierges sont les meilleures personnes du monde. On m'a donné des gendarmes pour me préserver de l'ennui j'ai trouvé cela fort bon pour le jour, et fort mauvais pour la nuit : je me suis plainte de cette indécence ; on n'a pas jugé à propos d'y faire attention. Je crois que c'est de l'invention de Chabot ; il n'y a qu'un capucin qui puisse avoir ces idées. Ceux qui me regretteront se réjouiront de me voir jouir du repos dans les Champs-Élysées avec les Brutus et quelques anciens ; il y a peu de patriotes qui sachent mourir pour leur pays. Les prisonniers dans la Conciergerie, loin de m'injurier comme les personnes dans les rues, avaient l'air de me plaindre ; le malheur rend toujours compatissant c'est ma dernière réflexion. ”* CHARLOTTE CORDAY à BARBAROUX, le 24 jour de la préparation de la paix à la prison de l'Abbaye ; PRUDHOMME, *Révolutions de Paris*, p. 686. No. 207.

mission. I have avenged many victims, prevented others. The people will one day acknowledge the service I have rendered my country. For your sake I wished to remain *incognita*, but it was impossible; I only trust you will not be injured by what I have done. Farewell, my beloved papa; forget me, or rather rejoice at my fate: it has sprung from a noble cause. Embrace my sister for me, whom I love with all my heart, as well as all my relations. Never forget the words of Corneille—

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1793.

‘The crime makes the shame, and not the scaffold.’”

She then said to her counsel—“You have defended me in a delicate and generous manner: the only one which was fitting. I thank you for it; it has made me conceive for you an esteem of which I wish to give you a proof. These gentlemen,” looking to the judges, “have informed me that my effects are confiscated: I owe some debts in the prison—I charge you to acquit them.” Not the slightest appearance of emotion was visible on her countenance, even when the court shook with the applause of the multitude at her condemnation. When she was conducted back to her cell, a confessor presented himself—“Thank you,” said she, “for your kindness; but I have no need of your assistance. The blood which I have shed, and that which I am about to offer, are the only sacrifices I can present to the Eternal.”¹

¹ Prudhom.
Rév. de
Paris, No.
209. Parl.
Hist. xxvii.
334, 335.
Lam. Hist.
des Gir. vi.
217, 263.

The crowd which assembled to witness her execution exceeded anything yet seen in Paris; her youth, her beauty, her astonishing courage, the magnitude of the deed for which she was to suffer, produced universal and thrilling interest. When the executioners bound her hands and cut off her long hair, she said, “This is the toilet of death, arranged by somewhat rude hands, but it leads to immortality.” A young stranger named Adam Lux, from Mayence, saw her pass in the car at the entrance of the Rue St Honoré; with devout admiration he followed it to the place of execution, and wit-

78.
Her execu-
tion.

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nessed her death. Such were his feelings at the sight that he soon after published a vindication of her memory. She was drawn in a car, dressed in a scarlet robe—the colour assigned by law to assassins. As she passed along, at half-past seven in the evening, to the place of execution in the Place Louis XV., “her manner,” says the revolutionary journal, “had that exquisite grace which is above beauty, which art cannot imitate, nor language depict. She voluntarily held out her hands to be bound; but when they began to attach her feet to the plank, she shuddered, conceiving they were going to insult her. When the object was explained, she consented with a smile. A blush of virgin modesty overspread her beautiful face and neck when the executioner undid the clasp from her bosom; but it took nothing from her serenity of manner, and she herself placed and adjusted her head under the terrible axe. The immense multitude awaited the stroke in deathlike silence. When the guillotine had fallen, the executioner lifted the head, still perfectly beautiful, but pale; and struck it with his hand. A universal shudder was felt in the crowd: he raised it, and struck it again; the blood then suffused the cheeks, and restored their lovely carnation. Cries of ‘Vive la République!’ arose on all sides; but the beauty and courage of Charlotte Corday had made a profound impression on every heart.” Vergniaud said, on hearing the particulars of her execution, “She has destroyed us, but taught us how to die.”¹

¹ Chronique de Paris, Juillet 19, 1793. Hist. Parl. xxviii. 334, 335. Deux Amis, x. 376, 377. Th. v. 36, 37. Lac. ii. 82, 83. Prudhom. Rév. de Paris, No. 209. Lam. Hist. des Gir. vi. 265.

79.
Funeral
honours and
apotheosis
of Marat.

But crime is never expedient. Murder, even when prompted by the most generous intentions, seldom fails to defeat its own purpose. The dagger of Charlotte Corday only caused more blood to flow over France. It killed Marat as a man; but, in the excited state of the public mind, it made him a god. Robespierre pronounced an eloquent eulogium on his virtues in the Convention. “If I speak to-day,” added he, “it is because I am bound to do so. Poniards were here used: I should have

received the fatal blow. Chance alone made it light on that great patriot. Think no longer, therefore, of vain declamations or the pomp of burial; the best way to avenge Marat is to prosecute his enemies with relentless vigour. The vengeance which is satisfied with funeral honours is soon appeased, and loses itself in worthless projects. Renounce, then, these useless discussions, and avenge him in the only manner worthy of his name." His obsequies were celebrated with extraordinary pomp; a band of young women, and deputies from the sections of Paris, were invited to throw flowers on the body, and the president of the Popular Societies, who pronounced his funeral oration, said—"Let us not pronounce his eulogy: it is to be found in his conduct, his writings, his ghastly wound, his death. Citizens! cast your flowers on the pale body of Marat. He was our friend—the friend of the people; it was for the people that he lived, for the people that he died. Enough has now been given to lamentation: listen to the great soul of Marat, which rises from the grave, and says—'Republicans, put an end to your tears: Republicans should weep but for a moment, and then devote themselves to their country. It was not me whom they wished to assassinate; it was the Republic. It is not I who cry for vengeance: it is the Republic; it is the people; it is yourselves!'" His remains were consigned with funeral pomp to the Pantheon; and monuments were raised to him in every town and village of France. Posterity has reversed the sentence: it has consigned Marat to eternal execration, and associated Charlotte Corday with Timoleon and Brutus.¹

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¹ Journal des Jacobins, 14 Juillet. Journal de la Montagne, No. 47. Hist. Parl. xxviii. 339. Mig. ii. 279. Lac. ii. 83. Th. v. 88-91.

Robespierre and the Decemvirs made the assassination of Marat the ground for increased severity towards the broken remains of the Girondist party. Many of their friends remained in the Convention; with generous constancy they still sat on the benches to the right, thinned by the proscription of so many noble members. During the trial of Charlotte Corday, a secret protest, signed by

80.
Arrest of seventy-three members of the Convention.

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seventy-three deputies, against the usurpation of 2d June, was discovered ; they were all immediately arrested, and thrown into prison. The Convention, after their removal, contained no elements whatever of resistance to the tyrants. Adam Lux, the ardent stranger who had witnessed the execution of Charlotte Corday, and published an apology for her crime, was soon afterwards arrested for doing so, and condemned. On entering the prison, he exclaimed, "I am then about to die for her;" and he did die in effect, hailing with his last breath the scaffold, as the altar of patriotism and devotion which her blood had consecrated.¹

¹ Lam. Hist.
des Gir. vi.
268.

81.
Reflections
on the over-
throw of the
Girondists.

Thus perished the party of the Gironde, reckless in its measures, culpable for its rashness, but illustrious from its talents, glorious in its fall. It embraced all the men who were philanthropists from feeling, or republicans from principle—the brave, the humane, and the benevolent. But with them were also combined within its ranks numbers of a baser kind ; many who employed their genius for the advancement of their ambition, and were careless of their country provided they elevated their party. It was overthrown by a faction of coarser materials, but more determined character ; with less remains of conscientious feeling, but more acquaintance with practical wickedness. Adorned by the most splendid talents, supported by the most powerful eloquence, actuated at times by the most generous intentions, it perished the victim of a base and despicable faction—of men sprung from the dregs of the populace, and impelled by guilty and selfish ambition. Such ever has, and ever will be, the result of revolutionary convulsions in society, when not steadily opposed in the outset by a firm union of the higher classes of the community. In the collision of opposite factions, the virtuous and the moderate will, unless bold and united, be always overcome by the reckless and the daring.*

* So true in all ages is the opinion of Petrarch—

"Che chi discerne, e vinto da chi vuole."

"He who discerns, is conquered by him who wills."

Prudence clogs their enterprise ; virtue checks their ambition ; humanity paralyses their exertions. They fall, because they recoil from the violence which becomes essential to success in revolutions.

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The principles of this celebrated party disqualified them from taking an energetic or successful part in public affairs. Their aversion to violence, their horror at blood, rendered them totally unfit to struggle with their determined antagonists. They deemed it better to suffer than to commit violence ; to die in the attempt to preserve freedom, rather than live by the atrocities which would subvert it. Their principles in the end, when driven to extremities, were those so finely expressed by Louis XVIII. when urged to assassinate Napoleon—"In our family we are murdered, but we never commit murder."¹ Their greatest fault, and it is one which all their subsequent misfortunes could not expiate, consisted in the agitation which, partly from philosophic delusion, partly from ignorance of the world, partly from selfish ambition, they so sedulously maintained in the public mind. The storm which their eloquence created, it was beyond the power of their wisdom to allay. They roused the people against the throne on the 10th August ; they failed in saving the monarch on the 21st January, and fell on the 31st May before the power of the populace, whose furious passions they had awakened. Such is the natural progress of revolution, and the means provided by Providence for its termination and punishment. Its early leaders become themselves the objects of jealousy when their rule is established ; the turbulent and the ambitious combine against an authority which they are desirous of supplanting ; stronger flattery to popular licentiousness, more extravagant protestations of public zeal, speedily arouse the multitude against those who have obtained the influence which they desire for themselves. Power falls into the hands of the most desperate ; they gain everything, because they scruple at nothing.

82.
Causes of
their failure.

¹ Mémoires
sur Louis
XVIII. i.
221. Buzot,
10.

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83.

Analogy of
the rule of
the Girondists and
that of the
Legislative
Assembly.

The time which elapsed from the death of the King to the fall of the Girondists, was to the revolutionary Executive what the Legislative Assembly was to the constitutional throne. Both were brief periods, during which the inability of government to combat the forces of the Revolution was made clearly manifest, and in both of which, after a lingering and painful struggle, the ruling power was overthrown by an insurrection in the capital. The throne and Girondist government fell from the same cause—viz. the want of any military force to coerce the populace, and maintain the independence of the legislative as well as the executive. Both were the victims of the fatal delusion, that a government can rest on the moral support of the nation, without any protection from its institutions, and that no danger is to be apprehended from the people, if they are practically invested with the command of the only military force in the state. The Girondists destroyed themselves by the lamentable prostration of the power of government which they forced upon the reluctant Louis ; the revolt of the 10th August, in which they bore so conspicuous a part, ultimately brought themselves to the scaffold not less than their sovereign. And, by a remarkable coincidence and just retribution, the want of that very constitutional guard which they basely compelled their King to disband on the 31st May 1792,* proved fatal to their party on *that very day year*, on the 31st May 1793 ; and surrendered themselves to the scaffold—France to the Reign of Terror.

84.
Atrocious
character of
the faction
which over-
turned the
Girondists.

The party headed by Chaumette and the municipality of Paris, whose insurrection overthrew the illustrious league of eminent and eloquent men who had done so much to overturn the throne, was the basest and most atrocious that ever was elevated by popular passion or madness to power, in any age or country. Without the fanaticism and energy of Robespierre or St Just, without the vigour and occasional humanity of Danton and Camille

* Ante, c. VII. § 60.

Desmoulins, they possessed the whole bloodthirstiness and cruelty of both these parties, and added to them a baseness and cruelty peculiarly their own. Sprung from the very dregs of society, alike without character or employment when the Revolution broke out, they brought to the important situations in the municipality of Paris, to which they were elevated by their dexterity in pandering to the worst passions of the people, a baseness, falsehood, and villany, rare, fortunately for the world, in any class.* Perhaps there is not to be found in any language such a mass of ribaldry, falsehood, and obscenity, unrelieved by any talent save that which panders to the thirst for scandal, as is to be found in Hébert's well-known journal, the *Père Duchesne*. Yet this infamous production elevated him to greatness—rendered him one of the rulers of the municipality of Paris, enabled him to bid defiance to the party which had overturned the throne of Louis XVI., and bring the Girondists and whole philosophers of the Revolution to the scaffold! A memorable proof of the rapid ascendancy which, in revolutionary struggles, the basest and most atrocious of mankind ere long acquire, and of the fatal nature of the delusions which lead so many well-meaning but inexperienced men, in every age, to imagine that the multitude will select good governors for themselves, because it is for their interest to be well governed.

The Girondists, and the whole constitutional party of France, experienced, when they attempted to coerce their

* Chaumette, born at Nevers in 1763, was the son of a cooper, and at first received some education; but dissipation soon made him abandon his studies, and he gained his livelihood for some years as a pilot on the Loire. In 1789, when the Revolution broke out, he came to Paris, and got employment as a copying-clerk, and first rose to notice by his power of speaking in the Cordeliers club, where he was patronised by Camille Desmoulins. He was appointed Procureur of the Commune, on being elected member of the Convention, in September 1792.—Hébert, born at Alençon in 1755, of obscure parents, came to Paris in 1775 in quest of subsistence, and after living some time by villany, he was appointed a box-keeper at one of the lesser theatres, and afterwards became a footman, both of which situations he lost by his dishonesty. He was utterly destitute when the Revolution broke out; but that soon found him employment.

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85.

Instant
weakness of
the Girondists when
they strove
to coerce the
Revolution.

former allies, and restrain the march of the Revolution, the necessary effect of the false principles on which they had acted, and the perilous nature of the doctrines which they had taken such pains to spread among the people. They were never able thereafter to command the assistance of either of the great parties in the state—of the holders of property, or the advocates for spoliation. The former could place no confidence in them after they had confiscated the church property, persecuted the priests, carried the cruel decree against the emigrants, provoked the revolt of the 10th August, and voted for the death of the King ; the latter felt against them all the bitterness of personal deceit and party treachery, when they strove to wield the power of the executive against the men with whom they had formerly acted, and the principles by which they had excited so terrible a convulsion. It is this feeling of distrust on the one hand, and treachery on the other, which so speedily annihilates the power of the authors of a revolution, when they endeavour to restrain its excesses ; and renders the leader of a mighty host in one year utterly powerless and contemptible in the next. It is the charge of inconsistency which they never can get over ; the bitterness excited by an abandonment of principle, which paralyses all their efforts even to correct its abuses. The Girondists and Constitutionalists experienced this cruel reverse in the most signal manner, in all the later stages of the Revolution. Lafayette wielded the whole power of France when he arrayed the national

He was, from his command of vulgar slang and gross ideas, early employed by the extreme Jacobin party to conduct a democratic journal, called the “*Père Duchesne*,” the nature of which may be judged of from its title, “*Lettres b ———t patriotiques du véritable Père Duchesne*.” The author is in possession of a copy of this curious and valuable record of the Revolution. Full of blackguard expressions, atrocious falsehoods, filthy obscenity, and frightful blasphemy, it soon became a powerful engine in the hands of the atheistical and anarchical party, was hawked daily in every street of Paris, sent down in profusion to the departments, and forwarded by cart-loads to the armies. It now forms eleven volumes, one of the most curious monuments of the Revolution. —*Biographie Universelle*, xix. 545-547, (HÉBERT) ; and viii. 300 (CHAUMETTE).

guard against the monarchy in 1789 ; but he could not raise thirty men to join his standard in defence of the throne in 1792 ; and the former leader of the populace owed his escape from their ferocity solely to his confinement in an Austrian dungeon. Vergniaud and the Girondists were all-powerful while they were declaiming against the supposed treachery of the court, and inflaming the nation to plunge into a European war ; but when they inveighed against the massacres in the prisons, and sought indirectly to save the life of the monarch whom they had dethroned, they became to the last degree unpopular, and were consigned to prison and the scaffold amidst the applause of the very multitude which had so recently followed them with acclamations. “ Unhappy Girondists ! ” said Danton, some time after their fall, and when the effect of their deeds had become apparent, “ they have precipitated us into the abyss of anarchy ; they themselves were drowned in it ; we shall be submerged in our turn ; already I hear the sound of the waves a hundred feet above my head ! ”¹

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¹ Lam. Hist.
des Gir. iv.
291.

These facts suggest an important conclusion in political science, which is, that the injustice and violence of a revolutionary party can hardly ever be effectually controlled by those who have participated in its principles ; but that the only hope of the friends of order in such circumstances, is to be found in those who, under every intimidation, have resolutely *resisted* measures of injustice. There is something in courage and consistency which commands respect, even amidst the bitterness of faction ; and if a reaction against the reign of violence is ever to arise, its leaders must be found, not among those who have at first promoted and afterwards abandoned, but among those who have ever resisted the march of revolution. It costs little to a soldier to fight under the banners of an able and resolute adversary ; but he will never place confidence in a general who has deserted his colours during the combat. The republican writers are all in error when they

86.
The early
leaders of
revolution
can seldom
restrain its
last ex-
cesses.

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assert, that the horrors of the revolution were owing to the King not having cordially thrown himself into the arms of the constitutional party. With such allies he never could have mastered the Jacobin party, supported as it was by so large a proportion of the indigent and urban population of France. It was the Royalists alone who could have effectually taken advantage of the strong reaction against the Revolution which the first open acts of violence against the throne occasioned, and it was their emigration which left the nation impotent against its excesses. And the event has abundantly proved the justice of these principles. The Orleans and Girondist parties were never able to oppose any serious resistance to the progress of the Revolution, and history can hardly find a skirmish to record, fought in defence of their principles ; * whereas the peasants of La Vendée, without any external aid, and under every disadvantage, waged a desperate war with the Republic, and after many battles had been fought, and a million of men slaughtered, were still, on the accession of Napoleon, unsubdued. It was the general desertion of the country by the emigrants, the treachery of the army, and the undue humanity of the King, which really paved the way for the Jacobin excesses.

87.
Effect of the
heroic death
of the Gir-
ondists.

But although the previous excesses and reckless ambition of the Girondists precluded them from opposing any effectual resistance to the progress of revolution, they did much to redeem their ruinous errors by the heroism of their death. Posterity invariably declares for the cause of virtue ; the serenity and courage of the supreme hour often cause many previous faults to be forgotten. The last impressions are those which are the most durable ; the principles which, in the end, prove triumphant, are those which find a responsive echo in the human heart.

* The resistance at Lyons and Toulon, though begun under Girondist colours before the fighting commenced, was in reality conducted by the Royalist party.

Already this effect has become conspicuous. The talents, the vigour, the energy of the Jacobins, are forgotten in the blood which stained their triumphs ; the guilty ambition, the imprudent zeal, the irresolute conduct, the inexperienced credulity of the Girondists, are lost in the Roman heroism of their fall. The Reign of Terror, the night of the Revolution, was of short duration ; the stars which were extinguished in its firmament only turned the eyes of the world with more anxiety to the coming dawn. But the eloquence of Vergniaud, the devotion of Charlotte Corday, the heroism of Madame Roland, have made a lasting impression upon the world ; and while history, which records the dreadful evils which their impetuous declamations produced upon their country, cannot absolve them from the imputation of rash and perilous innovation, of reckless and guilty ambition, it must respect some of the motives which led even to errors, whose consequences were then in a great degree unknown, and venerate the courage with which, in the last extremity, they met their fate.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE WAR IN LA VENDEE.

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1.
Irreligious character of the French Revolution.

THE French Revolution was a revolt not only against the government and institutions, but the opinions and the belief of former times. It was ushered in by an inundation of scepticism and infidelity ; it was attended by unexampled cruelty to the ministers of religion ; it led to the overthrow of every species of devotion, and the education of a generation ignorant even of the first elements of the Christian faith. When the French soldiers approached the cradle of our religion, when they beheld Mount Carmel and Nazareth, when they visited the birthplace of Christ, and saw from afar the scene of his sufferings, the holy names inspired them with no emotion ; they gazed on them only as Syrian villages, unconnected either by history or tradition with any interesting recollections. The descendants of Godfrey of Bouillon and Raymond of Toulouse, of those who perished in the service of the holy sepulchre, viewed the scenes of the Crusaders' glory with indifference ; and names at which their forefathers would have thrilled with emotion, designated for them only the abodes of barbarous tribes.¹

2.
Origin of the religious resistance in La Vendée to the Revolution.

But it was not in the nature of things, it was not the intention of Providence, that this prodigious Revolution should be effected without a struggle, or the Christian faith obliterated for a time from a nation's thoughts, without a more desperate contest than the dearest interest of

present existence could originate. Such a warfare accordingly arose, and was marked, too, with circumstances of deeper atrocity than even the Reign of Terror or the rule of Robespierre. It began, not amidst the dignity of rank, or the lustre of courts; not among those distinguished by their knowledge, or blessed by their fortune, but among the simple inhabitants of a remote district; among those who had gained least by the ancient institutions, and perilled most in seeking to restore them. While the nobility of France basely fled on the first appearance of danger, while the higher orders of the clergy, in a few instances, betrayed their religion by their pusillanimity, or disgraced it by their profligacy; the dignity of patriotism, the sublimity of devotion, appeared amidst the simplicity of rural life; and the peasants of La Vendée set an example of heroism which might well put their superiors to the blush, for the innumerable advantages of fortune which they had misapplied, and the vast opportunities of usefulness which they had neglected. It was there, too, as in the first ages of Christianity, that the noblest examples of religious duty were to be found; and while the light of reason was unable to restrain its triumphant votaries from unheard-of excesses, and stained with blood the efforts of freedom, the village pastors and uneducated flocks of La Vendée bore the temptations of victory without seduction, and the ordeal of suffering without dismay.

The district immortalised by the name of La Vendée, embraces a part of Poitou, of Anjou, and of the county of Nantes, and is now divided into four departments, those of Loire Inferieure, Maine-et-Loire, Deux-Sèvres, and Vendée. It is bounded on the north by the Loire, from Nantes to Angers; on the west, by the sea; on the south, by the road from Niort to Fontenoy, Luçon, and the Sables d'Olonne; on the east, by a line passing through Brissac, Thouars, Parthenay, and Niort. This space comprehends the whole of what was properly the

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3.
Character
and aspect of
the country.

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seat of the La Vendée contest, and contains eight hundred thousand souls : the Loire separated the district from that which afterwards became so well known from the Chouan wars. It differs, both in its external aspect, and the manners of its inhabitants, from any other province of France. It is composed for the most part of inconsiderable hills, not connected with any chain of mountains, but which rise in gentle undulations from the generally level surface of the country. The valleys are narrow, but of no great depth ; and at their bottom flow little clear streams, which glide by a gentle descent to the Loire, or the neighbouring ocean. Great blocks of granite rise up at intervals on the heights, and resemble castellated ruins amidst a forest of vegetation. On the banks of the Sèvre, the scenery assumes a bolder character, and that stream flows in a deep and rocky bed amidst overhanging woods ; but in the districts bordering on the Loire, the declivities are more gentle, and extensive valleys reward the labours of the cultivator.¹

¹ Personal observation, Laroch. 31, 32. Beauch. i. 3. Guerres des Vend. i. 10. Th. iv. 160, 165.

4.

The Bocage : its peculiar character.

The Bocage, as its name indicates, is covered with trees ; not indeed anywhere disposed in large masses, but surrounding the little enclosures into which the country is subdivided. The smallness of the farms, the great subdivision of landed property, and the prevalence of cattle husbandry, have rendered the custom universal of enclosing every field, however small, with hedges, which are surmounted by pollards, the branches of which are cut every five years for firewood to the inhabitants. Little grain is raised, the population depending chiefly on the sale of their cattle, or the produce of the dairy ; and the landscape is only diversified at intervals in autumn by yellow patches glittering through the surrounding foliage, or clusters of vines overhanging the rocky eminences. The air in this region is pure, the situation of the farm-houses, overshadowed by aged oaks, or peeping out of luxuriant foliage, picturesque in the extreme.² There are neither navigable rivers nor canals,

² Personal observation. Guerres des Vend. i. 16. Laroch. 32. Beauch. i. 3, 9. Th. iv. 165, 166.

no great roads nor towns, in the district ; secluded in his leafy shroud, each peasant cultivates his little domain, severed alike from the elegances, the ambition, and the seductions of the world.

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The part of La Vendée which adjoins the ocean to the south of the district, and which was formerly buried beneath its waves, is called the Marais, and bore a prominent part in this memorable contest. It is perfectly flat, and in great part overspread by salt marshes, which never yield to the force of the sun. This humid country is intersected by innumerable canals, communicating with each other, which are planted with willows, alders, poplars, and other marsh trees, whose luxuriant foliage frequently overshadows the little enclosures. The peasants are never seen without a long pole in their hands, with the aid of which they leap over the canals and ditches with surprising agility. Nothing can be more simple than the habits of the inhabitants. One roof covers a whole family, their cows and lambs, which feed on their little possession ; the chief food of the people is obtained from milk, and the fish which they procure in great quantities in the canals with which their country is intersected. The silence and deserted aspect of these secluded retreats—the sombre tint of the landscape, and the sallow complexions of the peasantry, owing to the general prevalence of aguish complaints, give a melancholy air to the country : but in the midst of its gloom a certain feeling of sublimity is experienced, even by the passing traveller ; and in no part of France did the people give greater proofs of an elevated and enthusiastic character.¹

5.
The Marais.

¹ Personal observation.
Laroch. 34.
Beauch. i. 6.
7. Guerres des Vend. i. 16. Th. iv. 166, 167.

A single great road, that from Nantes to Rochelle, traverses the district ; another, from Tours to Bordeaux, by Poitiers, diverges from it, leaving betwixt them a space thirty leagues in extent, where nothing but cross-roads are to be found. These cross-roads are all dug out as it were between two hedges, whose branches frequently meet over the head of the passenger ; while in winter or

6.
Obstacles which it opposes to an invading army.

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rainy weather, they generally become the beds of streams. They intersect each other extremely often; and such is the general uniformity of the scenery, and the absence of any remarkable feature in the country, that even the natives frequently lose themselves if they wander two or three leagues from their place of ordinary residence. This peculiar conformation of the country offered the greatest obstacles to an invading army. "It is," says General Kléber, "an obscure and boundless labyrinth, in which it is impossible to advance with security, even with the greatest precautions. You are obliged, across a succession of natural redoubts and intrenchments, to seek out the road the moment that you leave the great chaussée; and when you do find it, it is generally a narrow defile, not only impracticable for artillery, but for the smallest species of chariots which accompany an army. The principal roads have no other advantage in this respect but that arising from their greater breadth; for, being everywhere shut in by the same species of enclosure, it is rarely possible either to deploy into line, or become aware of your enemy till you are assailed by his fire."¹

¹ Kléber,
Mém. 19.
Guerres des
Vend. i. 18.

7.

Manners of
the inhabi-
tants and
the land-
lords.

There are no manufactures or great towns in the country. The land is cultivated by métayers, who divide the produce with the proprietors; and it is rare to find a farm which yields the proprietor a profit of £25 a-year. The sale of the cattle constitutes almost the whole wealth of the country. Few magnificent chateaus are to be seen; the properties are in general of moderate extent, the landlords all resident, and their habits simple in the extreme. The profligacy and vices of Paris have never penetrated into the Bocage: the only luxury of the proprietors consisted in rustic plenty and good cheer; their sole amusement was the chase, at which they have long been exceedingly expert. The habits of the gentlemen rendered them both excellent marksmen, and capable of enduring fatigue without inconvenience: the ladies travelled on horseback, or in carts drawn by oxen. But

what chiefly distinguished this simple district from every other part of France, and what is particularly remarkable in a political point of view, is the relation, elsewhere unknown, which there subsisted between the landlords and the tenantry on their estates. The proprietor was not only always resident, but constantly engaged in connections, either of mutual interest or of kindly feeling, with those who cultivated his lands. He visited their farms, conversed with them about their cattle, attended their marriages and christenings, rejoiced with them when they rejoiced, and sympathised with them when they wept. On holidays the youths of both sexes danced at the chateau, and the ladies joined the festive circle. No sooner was a boar or wolf hunt determined on, than the peasantry of all the neighbouring estates were summoned to partake in the sport; every one took his fusil, and repaired with joy to the post assigned to him; and they afterwards followed their landlords to the field of battle with the same alacrity with which they had attended them in those scenes of festivity and amusement.¹

These invaluable habits, joined to a native goodness of heart, rendered the inhabitants of the Bocage an excellent people; and it is not surprising that while the peasantry elsewhere in France revolted against their landlords, those of La Vendée almost all perished in combating with them against the Revolution. They were gentle, pious, charitable, and hospitable, full of courage and energy, with pure feelings and uncorrupted manners. Rarely was a crime, seldom a lawsuit, heard of amongst them. Their character was a mixture of savage courage against their enemies, and submissive affection to their benefactors: while they addressed their landlords with familiarity, they had the most unbounded devotion to them in their hearts. Their temperament inclined them rather to melancholy; but they were capable, like most men of that character, of the most exalted sentiments. Slow and methodical in their habits, they were little inclined to adopt the

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¹ Laroch. 34,
35. Lac. xi.
11, 12. Th.
iv. 166.
Beauch. i.
17, 18.

8.
Character of
the people.

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¹ Beauch. i.
14, 15.
Laroche. 35.
Guerres des
Vend. i. 24.
Th. iv. 166.

revolutionary sentiments which had possessed so large a portion of the population in the more opulent districts of France ; when once they were impressed with any truth, they invariably followed the course which they deemed right, without any regard either to its consequences, or the chances of success with which it was attended. Isolated in the midst of their woods, they lived alone with their children and their cattle. Their conversation, their amusements, their songs, all partook of the rural character. Governed by ancient habits, they detested every species of innovation, and knew no principle in politics or religion, but to fear God and honour the king.¹

9.
Strong religious feelings of the people.

Religion, as might naturally be expected with such manners, exercised an unbounded sway over these simple people. They looked up with filial veneration to their village pastors, whose habits and benevolence rendered them the worthy representatives of the primitive church. But little removed from their flocks either in wealth, situation, or information, they sympathised with their feelings, partook of their festivities, assuaged their sorrows. They were to be seen beside the cradle of childhood, the fireside of maturity, the deathbed of age ; they were regarded as the best friends of this life, and the dispensers of eternal felicity in that to come. The supporters of the Revolution accused them of fanaticism ; and doubtless there was a great degree of superstition mingled with their belief, as there must be with that of every religious people in the early stages of society, and every faith which obtains general influence in that period of national existence. But it was a superstition of so gentle and holy a kind, that it proved a blessing rather than a misfortune to those who were subjected to its influence ; and while the political fanaticism of the Revolution steeped its votaries in unheard-of atrocities, and produced unbounded suffering, the religious fanaticism of La Vendée only drew tighter the bonds of moral duty, and enlarged the sphere of Christian charity.²

² Laroche. 35.
Th. iv. 167.
Guerres des
Vend. i. 29,
31. Lac. xi.
9-13.

When the Revolution broke out in 1789, the inhabitants of this district were not distinguished by any peculiar opposition to its tenets. Those who dwelt in the towns were there, as elsewhere, warm supporters of the new order of things ; and though the inhabitants of the Bocage felt averse to any changes which disturbed the tranquillity of their rural lives, yet they yielded obedience to all the orders of the Assembly, and only showed their predilection for their ancient masters by electing them to all the situations of power which were committed to popular election. In vain the revolutionary authorities urged them to exert the privileges with which the new constitution had invested them, and appoint members of their own body to the situations of trust of which they had the disposal ; the current ran so strongly in favour of the old proprietors, that all these efforts were fruitless. When the national guards were formed, the seigneur was besought in every parish to become its commander ; when the mayor was to be appointed, he was immediately invested with the dignity ; when the seignorial seats were ordered to be removed from the churches, the peasants refused to execute the injunction ; all the efforts of the revolutionists, like throwing water on a higher level, only brought an accession of power to the depositaries of the ancient authority. A memorable instance of the kindly feeling which necessarily grows up between a resident body of landed proprietors and the tenantry on their estates ; and a decisive proof of the triumphant stand which might have been made against the fury of the Revolution, had the same good offices which had there produced so large a return of gratitude on the part of the peasantry, existed on the landlords' side in the other parts of France.¹

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XII.

1793.
10.

Feelings of
the people
on the
breaking out
of the Revolution.

¹ Laroche. 36.
Th. iv. 167.
Guerres des
Vend. i. 145.
Lac. xi. 14.
Beauch. i.
17, 25.

It was the violent measures of the Assembly against the clergy which first awakened the sympathy of the rural tenantry. When the people in the Bocage saw their ancient pastors, who had been drawn from their

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

11.

Discontent
excited by
the first
severities
against the
priests.

own circle, bred up amongst themselves, and to whom they were attached by every bond of affection and gratitude, removed because they refused to take the revolutionary oaths, and their places supplied by a new set of teachers, imbued with different tenets, strangers in the country, and ignorant of its dialect, their indignation knew no bounds. They ceased to attend the churches where the intruding clergy had been installed, and assembled with zeal in the woods and solitudes, where the expelled pastors still taught their faithful and weeping flocks. The new clergyman of the parish of Echaubroignies was obliged to quit his living from the experienced impossibility of procuring either fuel or provisions in a parish of four thousand inhabitants. These angry feelings led to several contests between the peasantry and the national guards of the towns, or the gendarmerie, in which the people suffered severely; and the heroism of the prisoners in their last moments augmented the loyalty and enthusiasm of the people.¹

¹ Laroch. 38,
39. Guerres
des Vend. i.
65. Lac. xi.
12, 13.

12.
Previous
conspiracy
in Brittany,
and abortive
attempts at
insurrec-
tion.

These causes produced a serious insurrection in the Morbihan near Vannes, in February 1790; but the peasants, though several thousands in number, were dispersed with great slaughter by the national guard, and the severities exercised on the occasion long terrified the indignant inhabitants into submission. Another revolt broke out in May 1791, occasioned by the severities against the faithful clergy; and the heroism of the peasants who were put to death evinced the strength of the religious enthusiasm which had now taken possession of their minds. "Lay down your arms!" exclaimed several Republican horsemen to a peasant of Lower Poitou, who defended himself with only a fork. "Restore me first my God," replied he, and fell pierced by two-and-twenty wounds. Nor was this heroic spirit confined to the peasantry: it pervaded all classes in these rural communities. During the summer of 1792, the gentlemen of Brittany entered into an extensive association for the purpose of rescuing the

country from the oppressive yoke which had been imposed by the Parisian demagogues. At the head of the whole was the Marquis de la Rouarie, one of those remarkable men who rise into eminence during the stormy days of a revolution, from conscious ability to direct its current. Energetic, impetuous, and enthusiastic, he was first distinguished in the American war, where the intrepidity of his conduct attracted the admiration of the republican troops, and the same qualities rendered him at first an ardent supporter of the Revolution in France; but when the atrocities of the people began, he espoused with equal warmth the opposite side, and used the utmost efforts to rouse the noblesse of Brittany against the plebeian yoke which had been imposed upon them by the National Assembly. He submitted his plan to the Comte d'Artois, and had organised one so extensive as would have proved extremely formidable to the Convention, if the retreat of the Duke of Brunswick, in September 1792, had not damped the ardour of the whole of the west of France, then ready to break out into insurrection.¹

¹ Beauch. i. 26, 28.

Still the organisation continued, and he had contrived to engage not only all Brittany, but the greater part of the gentlemen of La Vendée, in the cause, when his death, occasioned by a paroxysm of grief for the execution of Louis, cut him off in the midst of his ripening schemes, and proved an irreparable loss to the Royalist party, by depriving it of the advantages which otherwise would have arisen from simultaneous and concerted operations on both banks of the Loire. The conspiracy was discovered after his death, and twelve of the noblest gentlemen in Brittany perished on the same day, in thirteen minutes, under the same guillotine. They all behaved with the utmost constancy, refused the assistance of the constitutional clergy, and after tenderly embracing at the foot of the scaffold, expired, exclaiming, "*Vive le Roi!*" One young lady of rank and beauty, Angelique Désilles, was condemned by mistake for her sister-in-law, for whom she was taken.²

13.
Excessive cruelty with which it was suppressed, and general indignation thereby excited.

² Beauch. i. 34, 63, 70.

CHAP. XII. She refused to let the error be divulged, and died with serenity, the victim of heroic affection.

1793.

14.
The levy of
300,000 men
occasions an
insurrec-
tion.

These severities excited the utmost indignation among all the Royalists in the west of France. Their feelings, with difficulty suppressed during the winter of 1792, broke out into open rebellion in consequence of the levy of three hundred thousand men ordered by the Convention in February 1793. The attempt to enforce this obnoxious measure occasioned a general resistance, which broke out without any previous concert, at the same time, over the whole country. The chief points of the revolt were St Florent in Anjou, and Châlons in Lower Poitou; at the former of which places the young men, headed by Jacques Cathelineau, defeated the Republican detachment intrusted with the execution of the decree of the Convention, and made themselves masters of a piece of cannon. This celebrated leader, having heard of the revolt at St Florent, was strongly moved by the recital, and addressing five peasants who surrounded him:—"We shall be ruined," he exclaimed, "if we remain inactive; the country will be crushed by the Republic. We must all take up arms." The six set out amidst the tears of their wives and children, and fearlessly commenced a war with a power which the kings of Europe were unable to subdue.¹

March 10.

¹ Lac. xi. 47.
Guerres des
Vend. i. 67.
72. Beauch.
i. 89, 90.

15.

Fifty thou-
sand men
are soon
in arms.
March 14.

A few days after, the insurrection assumed a more serious aspect at Chollet, which was attacked by several thousand armed peasants; the Republicans opposed a vigorous resistance, but they were at length overwhelmed by the number and resolution of the insurgents. An incident on that occasion marked in a singular manner the novel character of the war. In the line of retreat which the Republicans followed, was placed a representation of our Saviour on Mount Calvary, and this arrested the progress of the victors, for all the peasants, as they passed the holy spot, fell on their knees before the images, and addressed a prayer, with uplifted hands, before they resumed the pursuit. This continued even under a severe

fire from the national guards ; the peasants threw themselves on their knees within twenty-five paces of the post occupied by the enemy, and bared their bosoms to the fatal fire, as if courting death in so holy a cause. When they made themselves masters of the town, instead of indulging in pillage or excesses of any sort, they flocked in crowds to the churches to return thanks to God ; and contented themselves with the provisions which were voluntarily brought to them by the inhabitants. Everywhere the insurrection bore the same character ; the indignities offered to the clergy were its exciting cause, and a mixture of courage and devotion formed its peculiar character. In a few days fifty thousand men were in a state of insurrection in the four departments of La Vendée ; but on the approach of Easter the inhabitants all returned to their homes to celebrate their devotions ; and a Republican column, despatched from Angers, traversed the whole country without meeting with any opposition, or finding an enemy on their road.¹

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1793.

¹ Laroche. 49.
Jom. iii. 390.
Beauch. i.
95, 97, 102.
Th. iv.
171, 172.
Guerres des
Vend. i. 74,
76.

After the Easter solemnities were over, the peasants assembled anew ; but they now felt the necessity of having some leaders of a higher rank to direct their movements, and went to the chateaus to ask the few gentlemen who remained in the country to put themselves at their head. These were not long in answering the appeal : M. de Lescure, de Larochejaquelein, Bonchamp, Stofflet, d'Elbée, undertook the dangerous duty of directing the tenantry over which they had most influence ; while the brave Cathelineau, who, though only a charioteer, had already, by his successful enterprise, gained the confidence of the peasantry, was made commander-in-chief—names since immortalised in the rolls of fame, which long opposed an invincible barrier to the progress of revolution, and acquired only additional lustre, and shone with a purer light, from the sufferings and disasters which preceded their fall.²

16.
Their leaders are
appointed.

² Laroche. 49.

When the peasants of the neighbouring parishes assem-

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

17.

Henry de
Laroche-
jaquelein.

bled to put themselves under Henri de Larochejaquelein, he addressed them in these memorable words:—"My friends, if my father was here he would be worthy of your confidence: I am but a youth, but I hope to show myself worthy of commanding you by my courage. If I advance, follow me; if I retreat, kill me; if I fall, avenge me." The peasants answered him with acclamations; but their arms and equipments were far from corresponding to the spirit by which they were animated. Most of them had no other weapons but scythes, pikes, and sticks; not two hundred fusils were to be found among many thousand men. Sixty pounds of powder, for blasting rocks, discovered in the hands of a miner, formed their whole ammunition. The skill and intrepidity of their chief, however, supplied every deficiency. He led them next day to attack a Republican detachment at Aubiers, and, by disposing them behind the hedges, kept up so murderous a fire upon the enemy, that they wavered, upon which he rushed forward at the head of the most resolute, and drove them from the field with the loss of two pieces of cannon.¹

¹ Laroche, 66,
67. Jom.
iii. 390.
Bonch. 41.
Beauch. i.
141.

18.

First con-
flicts, and
great activ-
ity in the
country.

La Vendée soon became the theatre of innumerable conflicts, in all of which the tactics and success of the insurgents were nearly the same. An inconceivable degree of activity immediately prevailed over the whole country. The male population were all in insurrection, or busily engaged in the manufacture of arms; the shepherds converted their peaceful huts into workshops, where nothing was heard but strokes of the hammer, and the din of war-like preparation. Instruments of husbandry were rudely transformed into hostile weapons: formed for the support of life, they became the instruments of its destruction. Agriculture at the same time was not neglected, it was intrusted to the women and children. But if fortune proved adverse, and the hostile columns approached, they, too, left their homes, and flew to the field of battle,² to stimulate the courage of their husbands, stanch their

² Bonch. 43.
Jom. iii. 390.

wounds, or afford them shelter from the pursuit of their enemies.

CHAP.
XII.

The method of fighting pursued by this brave but motley assemblage was admirably adapted both to the spirit by which they were animated, and the peculiar nature of the district in which the contest was conducted. Their tactics consisted in lining the numerous hedges with which the fields were enclosed, and remaining unseen till the Republicans had got fairly enveloped by their forces; they then opened a fire at once from every direction, and with such fatal accuracy, that a large proportion of the enemy was generally struck down by the first discharge. This thicket species of warfare continued till the Republican ranks began to fall into confusion; upon which the peasants leaped from their places of concealment with loud cries, and, headed by their chiefs, rushed upon the artillery. The bravest took the lead; fixing their eyes on the cannon's mouth, they prostrated themselves on the ground the moment they saw the flash; and rising up when the sound was heard, ran forward with the utmost rapidity to the battery, where the cannoneers, if they had not taken to flight, were generally bayoneted at their guns. In these exploits the chiefs always led the way; this was not merely the result of a buoyant courage, but of consideration and necessity; the Vendéans were in that stage of society when ascendancy is acquired by personal daring, and the soldiers have no confidence in their chiefs, if they are not before them in individual prowess.¹

1793.
19.
The peasants' mode
of fighting.

¹ Laroch. 66,
63, Beauch.
i. 186, 187.
Journ. iii. 391.
Bonchamp,
43.

Although the Vendéans took up arms for the royal cause, the most perfect confusion of ranks pervaded their forces. High and low, rich and poor, were, at the commencement of the war, alike ignorant of the military art. The soldiers were never drilled, a limited number of them only having been habituated to the use of fire-arms. In this extremity, the choice of the men fell on the most intrepid or skilful of their number, without much attention to superiority of station. A brave peasant, a shopkeeper

20.
General
confusion of
ranks in the
Vendean
forces.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

in a little town, was the comrade of a gentleman: they led the same life, were interested in the same objects, shared the same dangers. The distinction of birth, the pride of descent, even the shades of individual thought, were obliterated amid the magnitude of present perils. Many differences of opinion existed in the beginning of the contest, but the atrocities of the Republicans soon made them disappear in the Royalist army. Persons of intelligence or skill, of whatever grade, became officers, they knew not how; the peasants insensibly ranged themselves under their orders, and continued their obedience only as long as they showed themselves worthy to command.¹

¹ Laroch. 69,
100, 101.
Beauch. i.
185, 190.

21.
Formidable
nature of
this war-
fare.

It was extremely difficult for the Republicans in the outset to withstand this irregular force, acting in such a country, and animated with so enthusiastic a spirit. There was in all the early actions a prodigious difference between their losses and those of their opponents. The peasants, dispersed in single file between the hedges, fired with a clear view of their enemies, who were either in column or two deep in the fields; while their volleys could only be answered by a discharge at a green mass, through which the figures of the Royalists were scarcely discernible. Harassed and disconcerted by this murderous fire, the Republicans were rarely able to withstand the terrible burst, when, with loud shouts, the Royalists broke from their concealment, and fell sword in hand on the thinned ranks of their opponents. Defeat was still more bloody than action. Broken and dispersed, they fled through a woody and impervious country, and fell into the hands of the few peasantry who still remained in the villages, and who assembled with alacrity to complete the destruction of their enemies. When the Royalists, on the other hand, were routed, they immediately dispersed, leapt over the hedges, and returned home without the victors being able to reach them. Nowise discouraged by the reverse, they assembled again in arms, with renewed hopes, in a few days, and gaily took the field, singing "*Vive le Roi quand même.*"²

² Laroch. 69,
70. Beauch.
i. 184, 188,
190.

When a day was fixed on for any exploit, the tocsin sounded in the village assigned as the rendezvous of the peasants—the neighbouring steeples repeated the signal, the farmers abandoned their homes if it was night, their ploughs if day, slung their fusils over their shoulders, bound their girdle loaded with cartridges round their waists, tied their handkerchiefs over the broad-brimmed hats which shaded their sunburnt visages, addressed a short prayer to God, and gaily repaired to the appointed place, with a full confidence in the protection of Heaven and the justice of their cause. There they met their chiefs, who explained to them the nature and object of the expedition on which they were to be employed; and, if it was the attack of an enemy's column, the route they were to follow, the point of attack, and the hour and manner in which it was to be made. Immediately the groups dispersed, but the men regained their ranks; every one repaired to the station assigned to him, and soon every tree, every bush, every tuft of broom which adjoined the road, concealed a peasant holding his musket in one hand, resting on the other, watching like a savage animal, without moving, almost without drawing his breath.¹

CHAP.
XII.1793.
22.Their pre-
parations
for an ex-
pedition.¹ Desmon-
court, La
Vendée, 30.

Meanwhile the enemy's column advanced, preceded by a cloud of scouts and light troops, who were allowed to proceed without challenge close past the lurking foe. They waited till the division was fairly in the defile, and was so far advanced that it could not recede; then a cry was suddenly raised like that of a cat, and repeated along the whole line, as a signal that every one was at his post. If the same answer was given, a human voice was suddenly heard ordering the attack. Instantly a deadly volley proceeded from every tree, every hedge, every thicket: a shower of balls fell upon the soldiers without their being able to see the assailants; the dead and the wounded rolled together into the bottom of the road; and if the column did not immediately fall into confusion, and the voice of the officers, heard above the roar of musketry,

23.

Their first
onset, and
enthusiastic
valour.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

roused them to burst through the hedges by which they were enveloped, the peasants instantly retired behind the next enclosure, and from its leafy rampart a fire as deadly proceeded as that which mowed them down on the road. If this second hedge was carried in the same manner, three, four, ten, twenty intrenchments of the same sort offered their support to that murderous retreat: for the whole country is subdivided in this manner, and everywhere presented to its children an asylum, to its enemies a tomb. But the great cause of the early and astonishing success of the Vendéans was their enthusiastic and indomitable valour. The Republicans were, for the most part, composed of national guards and volunteers, who, though greatly better armed, equipped, and disciplined, were totally destitute of the ardent, devoted spirit by which the Royalists were animated. The former took the field actuated by no common feeling, but from the dread of the requisitions and sanguinary measures of the Convention; the latter fought alongside of their neighbours and landlords, in defence of their hearths, their children, and their religion. The one acted in obedience to the dictates of an unseen but terrible power, which had crushed the freedom in whose name they were arrayed; the other yielded to their hereditary feelings of loyalty, and deemed themselves secure of Paradise in combating for their sovereign.¹

¹ Desmoncourt, *La Vendée*, 31. *Guerres des Vend.* i. 55. *Laroch.* 70. *Beauch.* i. 165, 169.

21.
But they cannot be kept to their standards after any success.

Had the Vendean chiefs possessed the same authority over their troops which is enjoyed by the commanders of regular soldiers, they might at one time have marched to Paris, and done that which all the forces of the coalition were unable to effect. But their greatest success was always paralysed, by the impossibility of retaining the soldiers at their colours for any considerable length of time. The bulk of the forces was never assembled for more than three or four days together. No sooner was the battle lost or won, the expedition successful or defeated, than the peasants returned to their homes. The chiefs were left

alone with a few hundred deserters or strangers, who had no family to return to, and all the advantages of former success were lost for want of the means of following them up. The army, however, was as easily reformed as it was dissolved: messengers were despatched to all the parishes; the tocsin sounded, the peasants assembled at their parish churches, when the requisition was read, which was generally in the following terms:—"In the holy name of God, and by the command of the King, this parish is invited to send as many men as possible to such a place at such an hour, with provisions for so many days." The order was obeyed with alacrity; the only emulation among the peasants was, who should attend the expedition. Each soldier brought a certain quantity of bread with him, and some stores were also provided by the generals. The corn and oxen necessary for the subsistence of the army were voluntarily furnished by the gentlemen and chief proprietors, or drawn by requisitions from the estates of the emigrants; and as the troops never remained together for any length of time, no want of provisions was ever experienced. The villages vied with each other for the privilege of sending carts for the service of the army, and the peasant girls flocked to the chapels on the road-side to furnish provisions to the soldiers, or offer up prayers for their success.¹

The army had neither chariots nor baggage-waggons; tents were totally out of the question. But the hospitals were regulated with peculiar care; all the wounded, whether Royalists or Republicans, being transported to St Laurent sur Sèvre, where the charitable sisters and religious votaries, who flocked from all quarters to the scene of woe, assuaged their sufferings. They never could be brought to establish patrols or sentinels, or take any of the precautions against surprise which are in use among regular troops; and this irregularity not only exposed them to frequent reverses, but often rendered unavailing their greatest successes. The men marched,

¹ Laroch.
101, 102.
Jom. iii. 390,
391, 397.
Th. iv. 174.
Beauch. i.
184.
Guerres des
Vend. i. 98.

25.
Their total
want of bag-
gage and
equipments.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.
 1 Beauch. i.
 185, 186.
 Laroch. 103.

in general, four abreast, the officers in front being alone acquainted with their destination. They had few dragoons ; and their cavalry, which never exceeded nine hundred men, was almost entirely mounted on the horses taken from the Republicans.¹

26.
 Their mode
 of giving
 orders and
 fighting.

When the troops were assembled, they were divided into different columns, to attack the points selected by the generals. The only orders given were—Such a leader goes such a road ; who follows him ? Arrived at the point of attack, the commands were given after the same fashion—Move towards that house, towards that tree ; leap that hedge, were the only orders ever issued. Neither threats, nor the promise of rewards, could induce them to send forward scouts : when that duty was necessary, the officers were obliged to take it upon themselves. The peasants never went into battle without praying, and generally made the sign of the cross before they discharged their firelocks. They had a few standards which were displayed on important occasions ; but no sooner was the victory gained, than they piled colours and drums upon their carts, and returned with songs of triumph to their villages. When the battle began, and the sound of the musketry and cannon was heard, the women, the children, the sick, and the aged, flocked to the churches, or prostrated themselves in the fields to implore a blessing on their arms. With truth it might be said, that on such occasions there was but one thought, one wish, throughout all La Vendée—every one waiting, in prayer, the issue of a struggle, on which the fate of all depended. As the insurrection broke out from the prevalence of a common feeling, without any previous concert, so it was conducted without any definite object, or the least alloy of individual ambition. Even after great successes had inspired the most desponding with the hope of contributing in a powerful manner to the restoration of the monarchy, the wishes of the insurgents were of the most moderate kind. To have the King once visit their

sequestered country ; to be allowed, in memory of the war, to have a white flag on each steeple ; to be permitted to furnish a detachment for the body-guard of the sovereign, and to have some old projects for the improvement of the roads and navigation of the country carried into effect, constituted the sole wishes of those whose valour had so nearly accomplished the restoration of the monarchy.¹

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

¹ Laroch.
104, 105.
Jom. iii.
390, 391.

The early successes of the Vendéans, and their enthusiastic valour, did not extinguish the humanity which their dispositions, and the influence of religion, had nourished in their bosoms. In the latter stages of the war, the atrocities of the Republicans, the sight of their villages in flames, and their wives and children massacred, excited an inextinguishable desire of vengeance, and deeds of blood were common to both sides ; but during the first months of the contest, their gentleness was as touching as their valour was admirable. After entering by assault into the towns, they neither pillaged the inhabitants, nor exacted either contribution or ransom ; frequently they were to be seen, shivering with cold or starving with hunger, in quarters abounding both with fuel and provisions. “ In the house where I lodged,” says Madame de Larochejaquelein, at Bressuire, “ there were many soldiers, who were lamenting that they had no tobacco ; I asked if there was none in the town. ‘ Plenty,’ they replied, ‘ but we have no money to buy it.’ Under our windows a quarrel arose between two horsemen, and the one wounded the other slightly with his sabre ; his antagonist quickly disarmed him, and was proceeding to extremities, when M. de Larochejaquelein exclaimed from the windows—‘ Jesus Christ pardoned his murderers, and a soldier of the Christian army is about to kill his comrade.’ The man, abashed, put up his sabre, and embraced his enemy.” These touching incidents occurred in a town recently carried by main force, occupied at the time by twenty thousand insurgents, and peculiarly

27.

Their humanity, till it was extinguished by the Republicans.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

obnoxious to the Royalists, from the cruelty which its national guards had exercised towards the peasantry. "In this town," she adds, "I was surprised in the evening to see all the soldiers in the house with me on their knees at prayers, and the streets filled with peasants at their devotions: when they were concluded, they led me out to see their favourite cannon, called Marie Jeanne, their first trophy from the Republicans, which, after having been retaken, had again fallen into their hands; it was decorated with flowers and ribbons, and the peasants embraced it with tears of joy." When Thouars was carried by assault, the Republican inhabitants were in the utmost consternation, as they anticipated a severe retaliation for the massacre perpetrated by them upon the Royalists in that town, in the August preceding. What, then, was their astonishment when they beheld the soldiers, instead of plundering, or committing acts of cruelty, flocking to the churches, and returning thanks to God at the altars for the success with which he had blessed their arms. Even the garrison was treated with the most signal humanity. Twelve only were retained from each department as hostages, and the remainder, without either ransom or exchange, dismissed to their homes.¹

¹ Laroch. 90, 91. Beauch. i. 163, 164. Guerres des Vend. i. 49.

28.
Frightful
early atrocities in
Lower
Poitou.

In one district only the insurrection was early stained by the most frightful atrocities. In the marshes of Lower Poitou the peasants were seized with an uncontrollable thirst for vengeance, in consequence of the cruelties exercised by the Republicans on the Royalist leaders after the insurrection of the ensuing year. Mache-coult was captured during the absence of Charette; and, under the influence of revolting news of the Republican cruelties at Nantes and Paris, the prisons were forced by a furious mob, and above eighty prisoners massacred in one day. Nearly five hundred Republicans fell victims to the rage of a Royalist committee, at the head of which was a wretch named Souchu, who soon after hoisted his

true colours, and joined the Republicans, but fell a victim to the just indignation of the widows of those he had murdered. Charette, on his return, was horror-struck at these atrocities, and, finding his military authority not yet sufficiently established to coerce them, he had recourse to the clergy to aid his efforts. They fabricated a miracle at the tomb of a saint to influence the minds of the people, and, while they were prostrated round the altar, conjured them, in the name of the God of Peace, never to kill but in the hour of combat. At the same time Charette forbade any prisoner to be slain in his army, under pain of death, and concealed in his own house several zealous Republicans, whose heads were loudly demanded by his soldiers. By these means, the cruelty which at first had stained the Royalist cause in Lower Poitou was arrested, and a reply made, in a true Christian spirit, to the savage decrees of the Convention, which had ordered every Vendean taken in arms to be put to death without mercy in twenty-four hours.¹

M. Bonchamp, chief of the army of Anjou, was the most distinguished of the Royalist leaders. To the heroic courage of the other chiefs, he joined consummate military talents, and an eloquence which at once gave him an unlimited sway over the minds of the soldiers. Had he lived, the fate of the war would, in all probability, have been widely different, and the expedition beyond the Loire, which led to such disastrous results, been the commencement of the most splendid success. Gentle in manners, humane in conduct, affable in demeanour, he was adored by his soldiers, who were at once the most skilful and best disciplined of the Vendean corps. In the midst of the furies of a civil war, and the dissensions of rival chiefs, he was the enemy of intrigue; free from personal ambition, he was intrusted with an important command solely from his personal merits. His character may be appreciated from the words which he addressed to his young and weeping wife, when he put himself at

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

March 19.
¹ Pièces
Just. No. 10.
Beauch. i.
116, 123.
Th. iv. 172.

29.
Character of
Bonchamp.

CHAP.
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the head of his troops. "Summon to your aid all your courage ; redouble your patience and resignation ; you will have need for the exercise of all these virtues. We must not deceive ourselves ; we can look for no recompense in this world for what we are to suffer ; all that it could offer would be beneath the purity of our motives, and the sanctity of our cause. We must never expect human glory ; civil strife affords none. We shall see our houses burned ; we shall be plundered, proscribed, outraged, calumniated, perhaps massacred. Let us thank God for enabling us to foresee the worst, since that presage, by redoubling the merit of our actions, will enable us to anticipate the heavenly reward which awaits those who are courageous in adversity, and constant in suffering. Let us raise our eyes and our thoughts to heaven ; it is there that we shall find a Guide who cannot mislead, a force which cannot be shaken, an eternal reward for transitory grief."¹

¹ Bonch. 25.
Beauch. i.
98. Jom.
iii. 392.
Th. iv. 176.
Laroche. 93.

30.
of Cathelineau.

Cathelineau, a peasant by birth, and a charioteer by profession, was the first of the chiefs who acquired the unlimited confidence of the soldiers. To an extraordinary degree of intelligence, and the strongest natural sagacity, he joined a nervous eloquence, admirably calculated to influence the soldiers. His age was thirty-four years ; his disposition modest and retiring. He was without either ambition or cupidity ; humble and unassuming, he sought only to do his duty. He acquired influence without either desiring or intending it ; and got a lead in the armies he knew not how—a situation in which its noble leaders had the patriotism and judgment at once to confirm him. Such was his reputation for piety and rectitude, that the peasants called him the Saint of Anjou, and earnestly sought to be placed in battle by his side, deeming it impossible that those could be wounded who were near so unblemished a man.²

² Laroche. 95.
Beauch. i.
91, 92.

Henri de Larochejaquelein, son of the Marquis de Larochejaquelein, was the leader of all the parishes which

were situated round Châtillon. He refused to follow the general tide of emigration, and, on the contrary, repaired to Paris to defend the constitutional monarchy; and when the revolt on the 10th August overturned the throne, he set out for La Vendée, exclaiming, "I will retire to my province, and soon you will hear of me!" Though still young, he acquired the confidence of the soldiers by his invincible courage and coolness in action, which gained for him the surname of the Intrepid. He was reproached for being too forward in battle, carried away by his ardour, and forgetting the general in the soldier. Frequently before making a prisoner, he offered to give him the chance of escape by a personal conflict. Councils of war, or the duties of a commander, fatigued his buoyant disposition, and he generally fell asleep after giving his opinion, and answered to the reproaches of his brother officers, "Why do you insist upon making me a general? I wish only to be a hussar, to have the pleasure of fighting." Notwithstanding this passion for danger, he was full of sweetness and humanity; and when the combat was over, no one was more generous to the vanquished. Even after his eminent services, he formed only the most humble wishes for himself. "Should we replace the King on the throne," said he, "I hope he will give me a regiment of hussars." He performed the most eminent services in the war, and at its most critical period was unanimously elected to the supreme command. After innumerable heroic actions, he fell in an obscure skirmish, and was interred in the cemetery of St Aubin. "Chance," says the annalist, "has covered his tomb, as well as that of his brother Louis, with the Flower of Achilles; and never did it blossom over remains more worthy of the name."¹

M. de Leseure, the cousin and intimate friend of Henri de Larochejaquelein, was distinguished by a bravery of a totally different character. Cool, intrepid, and sagacious, he was not less daring than his youthful comrade; but

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31.

Of Henry de
Larocheja-
quelein.

¹ Genoude,
47. Bonch.
41. Laroche.
96, 98. Jom.
iii. 393.

32.
Of M. de
Leseure.

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his valour was the result of reflection and a sense of duty. His counsels were much regarded, from his knowledge of fortification and the art of war, but a certain degree of obstinacy diminished the weight of his opinions. His humanity was angelic. During the whole of that terrible war, in which generals as well as soldiers so often fought personally with their enemies, no one ever fell by his hand; and even in the worst times, when the cruelties of the Republicans had roused the most gentle to fury, he incessantly laboured to save the lives of the prisoners. Learned, studious, and thoughtful, he had prescribed to himself, at the age of eighteen, the most severe economy, to discharge the debts of an extravagant father; and it was not till he was twenty-five, and had become a father, that gentler feelings softened the native austerity of his character. His young wife, only daughter of the Marquis of Donnissan, a rich heiress, united to all the beauty and graces more than the courage of her sex. The only occasion on which he was heard to swear, was when his indignant soldiers murdered a prisoner behind his back, whom he had disarmed in the act of discharging a musket at his bosom. The number of lives which he saved during the war was incalculable; and, alone of all the chiefs in that memorable struggle, it could be said with truth, that his glory was unstained by human blood.¹

¹ Laroch. 97.
Bonch. 47.
Beauch. i.
147.

³³.
Of d'Elbée.

In the Grand Army, as it was called, of La Vendée, the principal chief was M. d'Elbée, a peasant of Saxon descent, but naturalised in France. He was forty years old when the contest commenced, ignorant of the world, devout, enthusiastic, and superstitious; but his principal merit consisted in an extraordinary coolness in danger, which rivalled that of Marshal Ney himself. He resembled more nearly than any of the other chiefs the Puritan leaders of the great rebellion in England. His talents for war were great, and his courage undaunted; but greater still was his influence over his rude and enthu-

siastic followers. His devotion was sincere ; but finding, like Cromwell, that it was the most powerful lever to move the peasants, he carried it to an extravagant height. He acquired, by extraordinary sanctity, an unbounded ascendancy over his soldiers, and justified their confidence by great talents as a leader, which ultimately led to his appointment as commander-in-chief—a situation which he filled with unshaken firmness during a period of disaster and ruin.¹

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¹ Jom. iii.
392. Thur-
reau, Mém.
92. Beauch.
i. 97. Th.
iv. 176.

Stofflet, an Alsatian by birth, and a gamekeeper by profession, was early distinguished by his devotion to the Royal cause, and headed some of the first detachments which took the field. Endowed with a powerful frame, hardy in his habits, harsh in his manners, he never acquired, like the chiefs of gentle blood, the love of the soldiers ; but his stern character and unbending severity made him more implicitly obeyed than any other leader, and on that account his services were highly prized by the Royalist generals. Active, intelligent, and brave, he was a skilful partisan rather than a consummate general ; but when the death of the other chiefs opened to him the way to a high command, his ambition and jealousy contributed much to the ruin of the common cause.²

34.
Stofflet.

² Laroch. 95.
Jom. iii. 394.
Beauch. i.
95.

Charette, the last of this illustrious band, succeeded to eminence late in the struggle, and when the war had become an affair of posts rather than a regular contest. He was originally a lieutenant in the navy, and of a feeble and delicate constitution ; but the habits of the chase, to which he was passionately attached, and in which he frequently lay for months in the woods, strengthened his frame to such a degree as rendered him capable of enduring any fatigue, and made him intimately acquainted both with the rural inhabitants and the country which he had occasion to traverse. He was for some days unwilling to place himself at the head of the peasantry, who entreated him to take the command, from a distrust of success with their feeble means ; and when he was prevailed on, he

35.
And Cha-
rette.

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showed at once his decision of character, by requiring from them instantaneous submission to his orders, and his spirit of devotion, by taking an oath on the Gospels, at the high altar of the church of Machecoul, to be faithful to the cause of God and the throne. His courage was unconquerable, his firmness invincible, his resources unbounded ; and long after the conflict had become hopeless in other quarters, he maintained, in the marshes and forests of Lower Vendée, a desperate struggle. Such was the terror inspired by his achievements, that when he was at the head of only fourteen followers, the Convention offered him a million of francs if he would retire to England ; but he refused the bribe, and preferred, even with that inconsiderable band, to wage war with a power to which the kings of Europe were hastening to make submission. Betrayed at length to his enemies, he met his fate with unshaken firmness, and left the glorious name of being the last and most indomitable of the Vendean chiefs.¹

¹Th. iv. 175, and viii. 216.
Beauch. i. 105, 106.
Laroch. 415.

36.
The forces which they severally commanded.

The troops which these chiefs commanded were formed into three divisions. The first, or the army of Anjou, under the orders of Bonchamp, composed of twelve thousand men, was destined to combat the Republicans from the side of Angers. The second, called the Grand Army, under the command of d'Elbée, amounted to twenty thousand men, and on important occasions it could be raised to double that amount. The third, called the Army of the Marais, obeyed the orders of Charette, and at one time also was raised to twenty thousand combatants. Besides these, a corps of twelve thousand men was stationed at Montaigu, to observe the garrison of Luçon, and several smaller bodies, amounting in all to three thousand men, kept up the communications between these larger corps.²

²Jom. iii. 363. Laroch. 92.
Th. iv. 175, 176.

The early measures of the Convention to crush the insurrection were marked by the bloody spirit which had so long characterised their proceedings. Orders were despatched, on the first intelligence of the revolt, to the

Republican soldiers, to exterminate men, women, children, animals, and vegetation. They sent against them the ruffian bands of the Marseillais, who, on their arrival at Bressuire, immediately exclaimed, that they must begin by massacring the prisoners ; and, surrounding the jail, put to death eleven peasants, who had been seized in their beds a few days before, on suspicion of being in concert with the insurgents. The fate of these brave men, who were cut down with sabres while on their knees praying to God, and exclaiming “Vive le Roi !” excited universal enthusiasm among the inhabitants. “It is painful,” said the Republican Commissioners, “to be obliged to proceed to extremities ; but they cannot be avoided, from the fanaticism of the peasants, who, in no one instance, have been known to betray their landlords. We must cut down the hedges and woods, decimate the inhabitants, send the remainder into the interior of France, and repeople the country by colonies of patriots.” Nor were these atrocities the work merely of the generals in command. By a solemn decree of the Convention, they were enjoined to proceed with unheard-of rigour against the insurgents. By this sanguinary law, “all the persons who have taken any share in the revolts are declared *hors la loi*, and, in consequence, deprived of trial by jury, and all the privileges accorded by law to accused persons ; if taken in arms, they are to be shot within twenty-four hours by a military commission, proceeding on the testimony of a single witness ; those who had any share in the revolt, though not taken in arms, shall be subjected to the same mode of trial and punishment ; all the priests and nobles, with their families and servants, shall undergo the same punishment ; the pain of death shall in all cases draw after it a confiscation of goods ; and the same shall hold with those slain in battle, when the corpse is identified before the criminal judges.”¹

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37.

Savage orders of the Convention against giving any quarter. March 19.

¹ Decree, March 19. Hist. Parl. xxv. 132, 133. Beauch. i. 367. Bonch. 22, 71, 73.

The Royalists, in no instance in the commencement of the war, resorted to any measures of retaliation, except

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38.
The Royal-
ists, except
in one in-
stance, never
retaliated.

at Machecoul, where the peasants, as already noticed, immediately after the insurrection broke out, and before Charette had succeeded to the command, exercised the most revolting cruelties. These atrocities, to which the armies of La Vendée proper were ever strangers, and which were severely repressed by Charette when he assumed the command, did incalculable injury to the Royalist cause, by the horror which they inspired in the neighbouring towns. They not only prevented the opulent city of Nantes from joining the insurrection, but produced that obstinate resistance on the part of its inhabitants to the attack of Cathelineau, which occasioned the first and greatest of their reverses.¹

¹ Laroche.
481.39.
The Repub-
licans are
defeated at
Thouars,
4th May.

But the Republicans soon found that they had a more formidable enemy to contend with than the unarmed prisoners, on whom their atrocities at Paris had so long been exercised. The first expedition of importance undertaken by the Royalists was against Thouars, which was occupied by General Quétinau, with a division of seven thousand men. A large proportion of the peasants were here brought into action for the first time; but their courage supplied the place both of discipline and experience. After a severe fire, the ammunition of the Royalists began to fail, upon which M. de Lescure seized a fusil from a soldier, descended the heights on which his troops were posted, and calling to the soldiers to follow him, rushed over the bridge which led to the city. A tremendous discharge of grape and musketry deterred even the bravest of his followers, and he stood alone amidst the smoke; he returned to his companions, exhorted them to follow him, and a second time tried the perilous pass; but again he stood alone, his clothes pierced in many places with balls. At this moment Henri de Larochejaquelein came up, and along with Foret and a single peasant, advanced to support their heroic comrade: all four rushed over the bridge, followed by the soldiers, who now closely pursued their steps, and assailed and carried the barricades; while Bonchamp,

who had discovered a ford at a short distance, destroyed a body of the national guard which defended it, and drove the Republicans back to the town. Its ancient walls could not long resist the fury of the victors ; Henri de Larochejaquelein, by mounting on the shoulders of a soldier, reached the top of the rampart, helped up the boldest of his followers, and speedily the town was carried. Six thousand prisoners, twelve cannons, and twenty caissons, fell into the hands of the Royalists. Though strongly inclined to Republican principles, and stained by the massacre of the Royalists in the preceding August, the city underwent none of the horrors which usually await a place taken by assault : not an inhabitant was maltreated, nor a house pillaged ; the peasants flocked to the churches to return thanks to God ; and amused themselves with burning the tree of Liberty, and the papers of the municipality.¹

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¹ Jom. iii.
394. La-
roch. 108,
112. Bonch.
27, 28.
Beauch. i.
161, 163.

Encouraged by this success, the Vendéans advanced against Chataigneraie, which was garrisoned by four thousand Republicans. By a vigorous attack it was carried, and the garrison, after sustaining severe losses, with difficulty escaped to Fontenay. Thither they were followed by the Royalists : but the strength of the army melted away during the advance ; great numbers of the peasants returned to cultivate their fields, and put their families in a place of security ; and when the army came in sight of Fontenay, it only mustered ten thousand combatants. With this force they assailed the town ; but though M. de Lescure and Larochejaquelein penetrated into the suburbs, the Royalists were defeated on other sides, with the loss of twenty-four pieces of cannon, including the celebrated Maria Jeanne, the first gun they had taken, so much the object of their veneration. The victorious wing with difficulty drew off their artillery from the place. This first check spread the deepest dejection through the army. Marie Jeanne, their favourite cannon, was taken ; they had now but six pieces left ; the ammunition was exhausted ; the soldiers had only a single cartridge remaining for each

40.
Storming of
Chataign-
neraie, and
defeat at
Fontenay.
May 5.

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¹ Laroch.
116, 119.
Lac. xi. 26.
Beauch. i.
171, 173.
Jom. iii. 395.

musket; and they were returning in numbers to their villages. In this extremity, the firmness of the chiefs restored the fortune of the war. They instantly took their determination; fell back to Chataigneraie, spoke cheerfully to the peasants, declared that the reverse was a punishment of heaven for some disorders committed by the troops, and sent orders to the priests in the interior to send forward, without delay, all the strength of their parishes.¹

41.
Bishop of
Agra.
Great effect
of an unex-
pected in-
cident.

An unexpected incident at this period contributed in a powerful manner to revive the Royalist cause. An Abbé, who had been seized by the Republicans, made his escape to the insurgents, declared that he was the Bishop of Agra, and arrived at Châtillon on the very day of the defeat. The peasants, overjoyed at having a bishop amongst them, flew to receive his benediction, and flocked in multitudes, full of confidence, singing psalms and litanies, to rejoin the army. Thirty-five thousand were speedily assembled, and the Royalist leaders lost no time in taking advantage of their enthusiasm to repair the late disaster. Bonchamp commanded the right, Cathelineau the centre, and d'Elbée the left, while Henri Larochejaquelein led the small but determined band of horsemen. On the following day they returned to Fontenay, where the Republicans, ten thousand strong, with forty pieces of cannon, were drawn up on the outside of the town to await their attack. The Royalist army received absolution on their knees, and M. de Lescure addressed them in these words:—"Let us advance, my sons; we have no powder—we can only retake the cannon with our staffs; Marie Jeanne must be rescued—she will be the prize of the swiftest of foot amongst you." The peasants answered with acclamations; but when they approached the Republican guns, the severity of the fire made the bravest hesitate. Upon this M. de Lescure advanced above thirty paces before his men, directly in front of a battery of six pieces, which was discharging grape with the utmost violence, stood there, took off his hat, exclaimed,² "Vive le Roi!"

² Laroch.
122. Bonch.
33, 34.
Beauch. i.
175, 177.

and slowly returned to the troops. His clothes were pierced, his spurs carried away, his boots torn, but he himself was still unwounded. "My friends," said he, "you see the Blues do not know how to fire."

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This decided the peasants; they rushed forward with rapidity; but before they reached the battery a new incident arrested their course; they perceived on an eminence a cross, and the whole soldiers instantly fell on their knees, under the fire of the cannon. An officer wished to raise them: "Allow them," said Lescure, "to pray to God; they will not fight the worse for it." In effect, a moment after, the men sprang up and rushed forward, armed with staffs and clubbing their muskets, with such resolution, to the cannons' mouths, that the artillerymen deserted them, and fled in confusion towards the town. Meanwhile, M. de Bonchamp, who had skillfully disposed his right wing in an oblique order, pushed forward with his men, and threw in so murderous a fire, at the distance of fifty paces, that, on his side also, the Republicans gave way, and the victory was complete. The victors and fugitives entered together into the town, headed by Lescure, who was the first man within the gates. No sooner was he there than he used all his efforts to save the vanquished, incessantly exclaiming, "Lay down your arms: quarter to the vanquished." Forty pieces of cannon, several thousand muskets, ammunition, and stores in abundance, rewarded this triumph of the Royalist arms, who sustained no serious loss except that arising from a wound of Bonchamp, who was shot by a traitor to whom he had just given his life. It was not the least part of their success, in the estimation of the peasants, that they retook their first and much-loved gun, Marie Jeanne, which was rescued from the Republicans by Foret, who with his own hand slew two gendarmes who guarded it. The enthusiasm excited by the recovery of this favourite piece of artillery was unbounded.¹ Filled with joy, the peasants threw themselves on their knees,

42.
Victory over
the Republi-
cans at Fon-
tenay.

¹ Laroch.
122, 123,
125. Bonch.
33, 35. Lac.
xii. 28, 29.
Beauch. i.
175, 178,
179.

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embraced their favourite cannon, covered it with branches, flowers, and garlands, and themselves drew it into the market-place in Fontenay, preparatory to its removal to a place of security in the Bocage.

43.

Humanity
of the Ven-
deans to the
prisoners.

The Royalists were much perplexed with the course to be pursued with the prisoners, to the number of many thousands, who were now in their hands. To retain them in custody was impossible, for they had no fortified places; to follow the example of the Republicans, and murder them, out of the question. At length it was determined to shave their heads, and send them back to the Republicans—a resolution the execution of which caused no small merriment to the soldiers. After the success at Fontenay, it was proposed to advance to Niort, where all the Republican troops of the neighbourhood were assembled; but the peasants returned so rapidly to their homes that it was found to be impossible. In four-and-twenty hours after the capture of the town, three-fourths of the army had returned to the Bocage, to recount their exploits to their agitated families. It was resolved, therefore, to withdraw from their conquest, which was an indefensible post in the midst of a hostile territory, and in a few days the whole army re-entered the Bocage.¹

¹ Beauch. i.
195, 196.
Laroch. 127.

44.

Repeated
successes of
the Royal-
ists.

Meanwhile, equal success had attended the arms of the Vendéans in other quarters. Cathelineau, Stofflet, and Charette, had defeated all the Republican bodies which attempted to penetrate into the parts of La Vendée where they commanded, and the latter had made himself master of the Isle of Noirmoutier. Successful combats took place at Vihiers, Doué, and Montreuil, which all tended to elevate the spirit of the troops; and it was at length resolved to unite all their forces for the attack of the important city of Saumur, where the Convention, who were now making the most vigorous efforts to check the insurrection, had collected twenty-two thousand regular troops, besides a great number of national guards. The Royalist forces, forty thousand strong, approached this

city on the 10th June. The Republican army had taken post in a fortified camp which surrounded the town. Their left rested on the heights in front of the old castle, their right on St Florent; while formidable batteries lined all the intermediate space between these points. Field-works had been thrown up, and in many places redoubts completed, to strengthen their intrenched camp, which covered the whole space running through the heights from the broad and deep stream of the Thouet to the banks of the Loire. Sixteen thousand men, and nearly one hundred pieces of cannon, were assembled on this important post, which commanded one of the chief passages over that great river.¹

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June 16.

¹ Lac. xii.
30, 31. Jom.
iii. 398.
Beauch. i.
197, 199,
232.

While the chiefs were deliberating about the best mode of assailing this formidable camp, the Vendéans, of their own accord, engaged in the attack. Such was the ardour of the troops, in consequence of some successful skirmishes in which the advance guard was engaged, that the whole army precipitated itself upon the town without waiting for the command of their leaders. This tumultuous assault, without any orders, was little calculated to insure success; M. de Lescure was wounded: the sight of his blood, whom they believed invulnerable, shook the courage of the soldiers, and a charge of cuirassiers completed their disorder. The peasants, seeing that their balls could not pierce these steel-clad enemies, fled in confusion, and were only rallied by M. de Lescure behind some overturned waggons, which formed a barricade in the line of their flight. The Royalist leaders, as well as the confusion would admit, now took measures to attack in regular form. Stofflet and Cathelineau directed their forces against the heights, and made a feint against the castle, while Lescure put himself at the head of the left wing to assault the bridge of Fouchard, and turn the redoubts of Bourman; and Henri de Larochejaquelein marched with his division towards the meadows of Varrins, to storm on that side the intrenched camp. While Lescure was rallying

45.
Their great
assault on
Saumur.
June 10.

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1 Jom. iii.
396. La-
roch. 137.
Th. v. 50.
Beauch. i.
204.

46.
Victory of
the Royal-
ists.

his men behind the waggons, Henri de Larochejaquelein assailed the Republican camp on the other side, where it was protected by a rampart and ditch. Finding that the soldiers hesitated to cross the fosse, he took off his hat, threw it into the ditch, and exclaiming, "Who will get it for me?" plunged in himself, and was the first to seize it, followed by the soldiers, who now broke through in great numbers, escalated the rampart, and entered the town.¹

Followed by sixty foot-soldiers, he traversed the streets, crossed the bridges of the Loire, planted cannon on them to prevent the return of the Republicans, and pursued them for a considerable distance on the road to Tours. General Coustard, who commanded the Republicans on the heights of Bournan, was now cut off from all communication with the remainder of the army, and he took the bold resolution to enter Saumur, taking the victorious Royalists in rear. For this purpose, it was necessary to cross the bridge, where the Vendéans had established a battery which commanded the passage. Coustard ordered a regiment of cuirassiers, supported by the volunteers of Orleans, to storm the battery. "Where are you sending us?" said the soldiers. "To death," replied Coustard; "the safety of the Republic requires it." The brave cuirassiers charged at the gallop, and carried the guns; but the Orleans volunteers disbanded under the fire, and they were forced to relinquish them to the Royalists. While these advantages were gained on their side, M. de Lesclure had succeeded in rallying his soldiers, who, by falling on their faces when the artillery was discharged, succeeded in capturing the redoubts opposed to them, while Stofflet broke into the town, and completed the victory. The trophies of the Vendéans in this great victory, more important by far than any yet gained over the Republicans by the allied sovereigns, were eighty pieces of cannon, ten thousand muskets, and eleven thousand prisoners, with the loss only of sixty men killed, and four hundred wounded. On the following day, the

castle surrendered, with fourteen hundred men and all the artillery which it contained. This success gave them the command of both banks of the Loire. The Royalists shaved the heads of their prisoners, and sent them back to the Republicans on no other condition than that of not again serving against La Vendée; an illusory condition, speedily violated by the bad faith of their antagonists. This humanity was the more remarkable, as at this period the Republicans had already commenced their inhuman system of massacring their prisoners, and all taken in arms against the Convention.¹

After the capture of Saumur, the opinion of the council of generals was divided as to the course which they should pursue; but at length they were determined by the consideration of the great advantages of the possession of Nantes, which would open up a communication with England, and serve as a depot and base for future operations up the course of the Loire, and, in consequence, it was resolved to attack that town. This resolution in the end proved fatal to the Royalist cause, by turning their Grand Army from the road to Paris, where it might have arrived, and stifled the reign of blood in its cradle, in the first moments of alarm following the taking of Saumur. Nevertheless it was ably conceived in a military point of view, as it was evident that the course of the Loire formed the line of the Royalist operations, and that Nantes was indispensable to their security. The day after the battle, M. Bonchamp arrived with his division, five thousand strong; while two noble young men, Charles Beaumont d'Autichamp and the Prince of Talmont, also joined the Royalist cause. At the same time the supreme command was given, by the council of generals, to the peasant Cathelineau—a striking proof of the disinterested magnanimity which distinguished the noble chiefs of the army; while, by a strange contrast, Biron, a peer of France, and son of a marshal, led the Republican forces.²

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¹ Lac. xii.
31, 32, 33.
Jom. iii. 396.
Laroch. 137,
138, 141.
Th. v. 50.
Beauch. i.
204, 208.

47.
Cathelineau
created
command-
er-in-chief.

² Beauch. i.
210, 212,
215, 219.
Th. v. 50.
Jom. iii.
397, 399.
Lac. xiii.
125.

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48.

Plan of the
Vendean
chiefs at this
period.

M. Bonchamp, who was gifted with the true military genius, strongly urged a descent into Brittany, to obtain a communication with the ocean, and thereafter an immediate advance to Paris ; and if this plan could have been adopted, it might have led to incalculable results. But the other leaders, though brave and able men, were not equally penetrated with the necessity of striking at the decisive moment at the heart of their enemies ; and, besides, great difficulty was anticipated in prevailing on the peasants to undertake so distant an expedition, or believe that anything could be required of them out of sight of their beloved Bocage. It was resolved, therefore, to descend the Loire to Nantes, in order to secure a firm footing on the sea-coast, and open a communication with England, after which, it was thought, more distant operations might with greater safety be attempted. A garrison having been left in Saumur, to maintain the passage of the Loire, the Grand Army under Cathelineau, after occupying Angers, which was hastily abandoned by the Republicans, advanced towards Nantes by the right bank of the river ; while Charette, who had twenty thousand men under his command, was invited to co-operate in the attempt on the left.¹

¹ Beauch. i.
238. Lat-
roch. 153,
154. Lac.
xii. 127.
Th. v. 66,
67.

49.
The Royal-
ists defeated
in their at-
tempt on
Nantes.

June 29.

During the march, however, the ardour of the peasants sensibly diminished. They had been long absent from home, and lamented the interruption of their agricultural labours ; nor could anything persuade them that, after having gained so many victories, it was necessary to attempt the reduction of so distant a place as Nantes. Great numbers left their colours, and returned to their fields ; and when the main army approached that city, it hardly amounted to ten thousand combatants. The hour of attack was fixed at two o'clock on the morning of the 29th June, and Charette, on his side, commenced the assault at that hour ; but the army of Cathelineau, having been detained ten hours before the little town of Nort, did not arrive till ten. They were there arrested by a few

hundred of the national guard, who fought with heroic valour. Notwithstanding this delay, the united forces commenced the attack with great vigour, and Cathelineau had actually penetrated, at the head of the bravest of his troops, into the town, when on the Place d'Armes he was severely wounded by a ball in the breast. The peasants, in despair, carried him out of the town, and abandoned all the advantages they had gained. In the end, although the combat continued for eighteen hours, the want of a leader rendered the courage of the soldiers of no avail, and the enterprise failed.¹

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1793.

¹ Lac. xii.
127. La-
roch. 153,
155. Th.
v. 69, 70.
Beauch. i.
238, 348.

This check proved extremely prejudicial to the Vendean cause. The army was dissolved in an instant. The brave Cathelineau was disabled by his wound; officers, soldiers, hastily threw themselves into boats and recrossed the Loire; the right bank was entirely deserted, and the men in groups of twenty and thirty straggled homewards. After an interval of a fortnight this noble chief expired, to the inexpressible regret of both the leaders and soldiers, and carried with him to the grave the best hopes of the re-establishment of the Royalist cause. The death of the commander was announced by a peasant, a neighbour of the deceased, to the anxious group who surrounded the house where he breathed his last, in these simple words—"The good Cathelineau has restored his spirit to Him who gave it to avenge his glory."²

50.
Death of
Catheli-
neau.

July 14.
² Laroch.
156, 174.
Beauch.
252, 253.

While these events were in progress on the side of Nantes, a formidable invasion by disciplined troops and able generals was defeated in the Bocage. Westermann, the celebrated chief of the Jacobin insurgents at Paris on the 10th August, having organised what he called a German Legion, from soldiers trained in the regular wars on the Rhenish frontier, and entertaining the most supreme contempt for the insurgents, penetrated, during the absence of the Grand Army of the Royalists at Nantes, into the heart of La Vendée. He made himself master in the first instance of Parthenay and Amaillou,

51.
Invasion of
the Bocage
by Wester-
mann, and
its defeat.

CHAP.
XII.1793.
June 20.
July 3.

which he reduced to ashes, and burnt Clisson, the chateau of M. de Lescure. The leaders fled to Châtillon, where the Supreme Royalist Council was assembled; but this last refuge was soon after invaded by Westermann, who burned to the ground the castle of La Durbellière, the domain of M. de Larochejaquelein. But here terminated the success of this enterprise. M. de Lescure had apprised the other chiefs of the danger, and they were now advancing by forced marches to his aid. Stofflet and Bonchamp arrived with their divisions, while the tocsin roused the inhabitants of the surrounding parishes; and an able attack, directed by Lescure, who was perfectly acquainted with the country, proved completely successful. In little more than an hour two-thirds of Westermann's army were destroyed; and the fugitives who escaped owed their salvation to the humanity of the very general whose chateau they had just destroyed. Westermann, with the utmost difficulty, escaped out of the Bocage with a few followers, and was in the end sent to the Revolutionary Tribunal, and perished on the scaffold.¹

¹ Th. v.
121, 122.
Beauch. i.
257-264.

52.
M. d'Elbée
is appointed
generalissi-
mo, who de-
feats Biron's
invasion.

After Cathelineau's death, M. d'Elbée was appointed generalissimo, and the utmost efforts of all the chiefs were exerted to reassemble the army. Such was the disinterestedness of the other leaders, that Bonchamp, qualified above all others for the situation, made his own officers vote for his rival. Meanwhile Biron, having collected fifty thousand troops, commenced a regular invasion of the Bocage in four divisions, extending from the Loire to the Sèvre. This inroad was at first attended with success. The Royalists, with twenty-five thousand men, attacked General Labarollière, who, with fifteen thousand, was established at Martigné-Briand; but after an obstinate engagement they were defeated, and retired to Coron. Thither they were pursued by Santerre, who deemed himself now secure of conquest; but a dreadful reverse awaited him. The tocsin was sounded in all the parishes; the curate of St Laud, who eminently dis-

Aug. 13.

tinguished himself in the war, collected all the forces of the neighbouring districts ; and on the 17th the Republicans were attacked, while marching in column on the high-road, in front and flank at the same time, and driven back in the utmost disorder towards Saumur and Chinon, with the loss of ten thousand men, and all their artillery, baggage, and ammunition.¹

Soon after, M. de Elbée, with Charette, attacked a corps of fifteen thousand men at Luçon ; but although success at first attended the Royalists, they were ultimately defeated with the loss of fifteen hundred men and eighteen pieces of cannon—one of the greatest disasters experienced since the commencement of the war. It was chiefly owing to their having followed, on M. Lescure's advice, a plan of attack which, though admirably adapted for regular troops, was not suited to the desultory and impetuous mode of warfare adopted by the peasantry. The whole artillery of the Royalists would have fallen into the hands of the Republicans, had not Larochejaquelein, at the head of sixty of the bravest of his followers, by prodigies of valour arrested the pursuit at the bridge of Dissay.²

Encouraged by this success, the armies of the Convention, now greatly reinforced by the efforts of the government, on all sides invaded the Bocage. Santerre, fatally celebrated in the Revolution, advanced at the head of powerful bodies of regular soldiers ; Chantonnay was occupied, and the country, wherever they penetrated, devastated with fire and sword. Even the farm-houses and the mills were consumed, in obedience to the orders of the Convention. But a severe retribution was awaiting them. The Royalists sounded the tocsin in all the parishes in the heart of the Bocage, and having re-assembled the peasants, made a combined and skilful attack on the Republican force, seven thousand strong, in the neighbourhood of Chantonnay. It proved completely successful, chiefly in consequence of the valour of the division of Bonchamp, which, not having shared in the

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1793.

July 17.

¹ Jom. iii.

400, 401.

Beauch. i.

278, 288,

297.

53.

Defeat of the

Royalists at

Luçon.

Aug. 13.

² Laroche. i.

194. Jom.

iv. 290.

54.

General in-

vasion of the

Bocage on

all sides,

which is

defeated.

Sept. 5.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

¹ Jom. iii.
247, 402.
Laroch. 195.
Beauch. ii.
7. Lac. xii.
129.

preceding reverses, had preserved all its wonted enthusiasm. The Republicans were routed, with the loss of all their artillery and baggage ; and such was the carnage that scarce eighteen hundred could be reassembled after the battle, and Santerre himself narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the enemy. At the same time, Charette maintained an obstinate contest in Lower Vendée. Though frequently defeated, he never suffered himself to be discouraged by his reverses, and destroyed several Republican columns that endeavoured to penetrate into his district.¹

55.
Arrival of
the garrison
of Mayence.

But the Convention, which was at last awakened to a full sense of the danger of the war, was now collecting forces on all sides to crush the insurgents. The garrison of Mayence, fourteen thousand strong, commanded by Kléber, and which the Allies, with culpable negligence, had not made prisoners of war, and only bound not to combat *the Allies* for a year, was despatched by post to the scene of action ; and great part of the garrisons of Valenciennes and Condé, which had been restored on the same condition, soon followed in the same direction. Not only the national guards, but the *levée en masse* of the neighbouring departments, were assembled ; and before the middle of September, upwards of two hundred thousand men surrounded La Vendée on all sides, and, by a simultaneous advance, threatened to crush its revolt. To oppose this formidable invasion, the Royalists were formed into four divisions—that in the neighbourhood of Nantes under the command of Charette, that on the banks of the Loire under Bonchamp, M. de Larochejaquelein in Anjou, and M. de Lescure in Eastern Poitou—while d'Elbée retained the supreme command.²

² Beauch.
i. 21, and
i. 313.
Jom. iii.
300. La-
roch. 197,
290.

56.
Able design
of Bon-
champ,
which is not
adopted.

The plan which Bonchamp strenuously recommended, and which bears the mark of great military genius, was to allow the enemy to penetrate, in detached columns, into the Bocage ; to overwhelm them successively by a junction in that district of the Royalist forces, who occu-

pied a central position ; and to take advantage of the first moment of alarm, cross the Loire, rouse the Royalist population of Brittany, and nourish the war from the resources of a hitherto untouched country. "What fortunate accident," said he, "has made us acquainted with the designs of the enemy? In it I see clearly the hand of God for the safety of La Vendée. The Republicans have at length discovered the secret of our victories; they wish to concentrate their forces to overwhelm us by their mass. We may, indeed, repulse the army of Mayence; but will it not return to the charge with accumulated numbers and resistless force? Let us then anticipate the enemy. Brittany calls us; let us march, and extend our destinies. Let us no longer be deceived by the hope that the allied powers will restore the monarchy: that glory is reserved for us alone. Masters of a harbour on the ocean, we shall find the Princes at our head, and we will at length acquire that political consistence, without which we cannot hope for durable success." D'Elbée combated the latter part of the project as too hazardous in the irregular state of the army; and, after a long discussion, it was resolved to remain on the defensive in La Vendée.¹

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XII.
1793.

It was the army of Charette which first found itself assailed by the immense forces of the Republicans. The Vendéans were there attacked by the redoubtable garrison of Mayence, which crossed the Loire and invaded the country on the 10th September. The Royalists were at first defeated in several encounters, and driven back by this invasion. Bonchamp was defeated near the rock of Erigné, while Lescure experienced a check at Thouars, and the whole of Lower Poitou was wasted with fire and sword, notwithstanding the utmost exertions of Charette. The successive retreat of these columns, however, brought the Royalist bodies near each other, and a simultaneous effort was made by all their forces. D'Elbée, and Bonchamp, who had now recovered from his wound, having

¹ Beauch. ii.
26, 27.
Laroch. 199.
Jom. iv.
300.

57.
Defeat of the
Republicans
at Torfou.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

Sept. 19.

united thirty thousand men, and the army having received the benediction of the curate of St Laud, and heard high mass at midnight, they attacked the Republicans at day-break on the 19th September. The Royalists were forty thousand strong ; the Republicans somewhat less numerous—but they embraced the garrison of Mayence, the best soldiers in France. All the chiefs felt that this invasion must at all hazards be repelled, and that the moment had arrived when they must conquer or die. Charette, certain of the co-operation of the other generals, had arranged his forces in order of battle, blocking up the road to Torfou. His defeated and discouraged troops, however, could not long withstand the shock of the veterans of Kléber ; they were broken, and falling into confusion, when M. de Lescure, seeing affairs wellnigh desperate, exclaimed, “Are there not four hundred men brave enough to die with me ?” The peasants of the parish of Echaubroignies, seventeen hundred strong, answered him with shouts ; and this feeble division withstood the shock of the Republican forces for two hours, till the division of Bonchamp arrived. This reinforcement speedily changed the face of affairs : the peasants, dispersed in single file behind the hedges which enveloped the Republicans, kept up a murderous fire on every side ; the cannon were carried by assault, and the whole army was thrown into confusion. Nothing but the heroic devotion of Colonel Chouardin and his regiment, who maintained the bridge of Boussay, and suffered themselves to be in great part destroyed before they abandoned it, preserved the invading army from total destruction.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
302, 303.
Laroch.
213, 214.
Beauch. ii.
34-41.

58.
And of
Beysser at
Montaigu.
Sept. 20.

Still the Royalists had not a moment to lose ; it was indispensable to attack immediately the corps of General Beysser, which was on the point of effecting a junction with the forces of Kléber. On the day after their victory at Torfou, they surprised him at Montaigu, and routed the Republicans entirely, with the loss of all their artillery, baggage, and ammunition. This was followed by

the surprise and total defeat of General Mukinski at St Fulgent by Charette and Lescure ; while, on the very same day, Bonchamp and d'Elbée assailed the retreating columns of General Kléber, encumbered with twelve hundred chariots, and after throwing them into confusion, captured a large portion of their baggage. But this success, though considerable, was nothing to what would have been obtained, had the whole Royalist forces been united, as they should have been, against the formidable bands of Mayence.¹

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

Sept. 22.
1 Laroeh.
215, 217.
Jom. iv.
303, 304.
Beauch. ii.
42-44.

In other quarters, the Vendéans were equally successful. General Rossignol, with fifteen thousand men, indeed, defeated an ill-concerted attack of the Royalist chiefs, Talmont and d'Autichamp ; but having, after this success, advanced with Santerre to Coron, he was there attacked by Piron and Larochejaquelein, who had succeeded in rousing all the population in the neighbouring parishes ; and with such skill were the Royalist operations conducted that the Republican army was pierced through the centre, and entirely dispersed, twenty-four pieces of cannon and all their ammunition being taken. Immediately after this success, a detachment of the Royalist forces was despatched against General Duhoux, who had crossed the bridge of Cé, and was driving the Vendean detachments before him ; but no sooner had he arrived at the heights of St Lambert, than he was assailed by the bulk of the Royalist forces, while Bernier, a farmer's servant in the parish of St Lambert, swam across the river, and attacked his troops in rear with the armed peasants in his vicinity. The rout was soon complete ; all the artillery of the invaders was taken, and their column, nine thousand strong, totally destroyed. Such was the terror produced by these defeats, that the *levée en masse*, assembled between Tours and Poitiers, dispersed without striking a blow, and the regular forces of the Republicans on all sides quitted the Vendean territory. Thus, by a series of brilliant military combina-

59.

Defeat of
General
Rossignol at
Coron, and
general de-
feat of the
Republican
invasion.
Sept. 15.

Sept. 18.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

¹ Jom. iv.
304-307.
Laroch.
202-210.
Beauch. ii.
28-32.

60.
Vigorous
exertions of
the govern-
ment at
Paris.

tions, seconded by the most heroic exertions on the part of the peasants, was the invasion of six armies, amounting to a hundred thousand regular troops, part of whom were the best soldiers of France, besides an equal force of national guards, defeated, and losses inflicted on the Republicans incomparably greater than they had suffered from all the Allies put together since the commencement of the war. A striking proof of the admirable skill with which the Vendean chiefs had availed themselves of their central position, and peculiar mode of fighting, to crush the invading forces, and a memorable instance of what can be effected by resolute men, even without the advantages of regular organisation, if ably conducted, against the most formidable superiority of military force.¹

But the Vendean had to contend with a redoubtable adversary, and unfortunately the invading army from which most was to be apprehended, was that which had suffered least from their attacks. The Convention made the most vigorous efforts to meet the danger. Barrère, in a report to the Convention, declared, "The inexplicable La Vendée still exists; twenty times since this rebellion broke out have your representatives, your generals, the committee itself, declared that it was stifled, and yet it exists more formidable than ever. We thought we could destroy it; the tocsin sounded in all the neighbouring departments; a prodigious number of armed citizens was assembled to crush the insurrection; and a sudden panic has dissolved the whole like a cloud. You must change your system; one despotic chief must head your armies; an end must be put to the existence of the brigands. Like the giant in the fable, who was invincible only when he touched the earth, you must sever them from their native soil before you can destroy them."² In pursuance of this suggestion, General Léchelle was appointed generalissimo: the Brest fleet was ordered to sail, to co-operate with the armies; and a proclamation was addressed to the troops, enjoining

² Hist. Parl.
xxx. 17, 19.
Jom. iv.
308, 309.
Beauch. ii.
56, 57. La-
roch. 218.

them to exterminate the Vendéans before the 20th of October.

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XII.

Meanwhile the peasants, as usual, seeing the present danger over, returned to their homes; the standards of their generals were almost deserted. *Te Deum* was sung in all the parishes, amidst the joyful acclamations of the inhabitants. M. de Lescure, at the ceremony in his own parish church, knelt behind a column, to withdraw himself from the admiring gaze of his countrymen. On learning the massacres which the Republicans were making of their countrymen who had been taken prisoners, and which were commanded by the decrees of the Convention, forbidding them to give quarter, the Royalist soldiers loudly demanded reprisals upon the numerous captives who were in their hands; but the leaders expressed such horror at the proposal, that they always succeeded in preventing it from being carried into effect. The formidable bands of Mayence, at this time, were so much disgusted with the savage proceedings of the Convention that they offered, if their pay was guaranteed, to join themselves in a body to the Royalist cause; but the large sum required for this purpose, amounting to 400,000 francs (£16,000), joined to the suspicions of the Royalists that some treachery was intended, frustrated a coalition which, if executed, would have given a decisive preponderance to the Vendean forces. Where was England, whose government could so easily have procured this sum, which was beyond the reach of the peasants of La Vendée, and thereby secured an inestimable support to the Royalist arms in the west of France?¹

1793.

61.
Continued
humanity of
the Vendean
chiefs.

¹ Beauch. ii.
50-52, 66.
Laroch, 218,
219.

Unfortunately at this time, when their enemies were concentrating under one able hand the whole conduct of the Vendean war, the Royalist chiefs, divided about the points to which their forces should be directed, separated their troops—Charette drawing off towards the island of Noirmoutier, while Lescure and Beaurepaire took post

62.
Ruinous di-
visions of
the Royal-
ists.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

Oct. 7.

Oct. 12.

¹ *Jom.* iv.
312, 313.
Laroch. 221,
227, 229.
Beauch. ii.
58, 61, 73,
75.

near Châtillon to make head against Westermann, who was advancing with a powerful force, massacring without distinction all the inhabitants, and burning every edifice that his soldiers could reach. Lescure, Stofflet, and Larochejaquelein, united, had only six thousand men at Moulin-aux-Chêvres, a little in front of Châtillon, where they were attacked by a column of twenty-five thousand Republicans under Westermann: the superiority of his force was such that he drove them into the town, which was speedily captured by his forces. But this success was of short duration. Bonchamp and Larochejaquelein having roused the peasantry, and reassembled the whole Grand Army, two days after, made a general attack upon the Republicans, totally defeated them, and drove them out of Châtillon, with the loss of above ten thousand men and all their artillery. After the rout, Westermann, who saw that the Royalists in Châtillon were almost all drunk, and kept no look-out, conceived the bold design of re-entering the town, and cutting to pieces its garrison. This project was completely successful. Taking a hundred intrepid hussars, with a grenadier mounted behind each man, he returned at midnight to Châtillon, where the Vendéans, as usual, had placed no sentinels, broke into the streets, cut down great numbers of the Royalists, who, between sleep and intoxication, were incapable of making any resistance, set fire to the town, and after a scene of unequalled horror and blood, withdrew before daylight in the morning.¹

63.

Fresh invasion by the Republicans.
Royalists defeated, and M. de Lescure mortally wounded.
Oct. 14.

Hardly was this invasion repulsed, when the Vendéans were called on to make head against a more formidable enemy in another quarter. The redoubtable bands of Mayence, reinforced by several other divisions, in all forty thousand strong, were advancing into the very heart of the country, and had already nearly reached Chollet, while the unhappy divisions of the Vendean chiefs detained in other quarters a large proportion of their forces. Notwithstanding the most urgent representations from the

other leaders, Charette persisted in his system of separate operations, and wasted his force in a fruitless expedition to the Isle of Noirmoutier. Lescure and Bonchamp, however, hastened to support M. de Royrand, who was retreating before the invaders. It was arranged that the former should await the enemy in front, while the latter, by a circuitous route, assailed them in flank. But the Republicans having advanced more slowly than was expected, Lescure came up with them before Bonchamp was ready to support him; and though they yielded in the first instance to the furious attack of the Vendéans, yet the inferiority of their force, and a desperate charge in flank made by Beaupuy when disordered by success, threw them into confusion, and they fell back to Beaupreau, while the Republicans bivouacked on the field of battle. The next day the victorious army entered Chollet, which the discouraged Vendéans could not be prevailed on to defend. The Royalist loss was not severe; but they sustained an irreparable misfortune in a wound of M. Lescure, who was shot through the head when leading on his men, as usual, at the commencement of the action. The wound proved mortal after several weeks of suffering, which he endured with the wonted heroism and sweetness of his character.¹

¹ Beauch. ii.
75, 78, 83.
Jom. iv.
314. La-
roch. 229,
230.

The Vendéans were cruelly discouraged by this disaster: the more so, as the enemy's columns had now penetrated the country in every direction, and the ravages they had committed gave no hope of maintaining the contest longer in their native land. It was resolved, therefore, to cross the Loire, and carry the war into Brittany: but, previous to this, it was deemed advisable by all the chiefs to make one desperate effort to crush the invading force in the neighbourhood of Chollet. The action took place two days after, and was contested with the utmost fury on both sides. The forces were nearly equal, the Royalists having forty thousand men, and the Republicans forty-one thousand; but the latter were greatly superior in their

64.
The Royal-
ists resolve
to cross the
Loire. Bat-
tle of Chol-
let.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

Oct. 17.

artillery, which consisted of thirty pieces, and cavalry, which amounted to three thousand men. Moreover, the infantry included the best troops in France. The combat was felt on both sides to be, what in effect it proved, decisive of the fate of the war. At three in the morning on the 17th October, the sound of artillery awakened the army, and the soldiers hastened to hear grand mass from the curate of the village where the headquarters were placed. The ceremony was performed by torchlight: the priest, in fervid and eloquent terms, besought them to combat courageously for their God, their King, and their children; and concluded by giving absolution to the armed multitude. The darkness of the scene, and the discharges of cannon which interrupted his discourse, filled all hearts with a gloomy presentiment of the disasters which were about to follow. The Republicans were drawn up in three divisions, the garrison of Mayence, with the cavalry, forming the reserve. On the Royalist side, Stofflet commanded the left, d'Elbée and Bonchamp the centre, and Larochejaquelein the right.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
315, 316.
Beauch. ii.
84, 85, 87.
Laroch. 232.
Lac. xi. 13.

65.
Battle of
Chollet, and
defeat of the
Royalists.
D'Elbée
and Bon-
champ
mortally
wounded.

The action commenced at ten o'clock. On this occasion the Vendéans marched for the first time in close column, like troops of the line, but they had no artillery. Henri de Larochejaquelein and Stofflet, after a short exchange of bullets, precipitated themselves on the centre of the enemy, routed it by the vehemence of their attack, and drove it back in disorder into the town of Challot, where the great park of artillery was captured. The battle seemed to be lost, and the Republicans, panic-struck by the furious onset of their enemies, were flying on all sides, when Léchelle, as a last resource, ordered his cavalry to charge, and the reserve, composed of the garrison of Mayence, to advance. The charge of horse took place from right to left through the whole Royalist army, now disordered by the rapidity of their attack, and at the same time the iron bands of Mayence emerged through the fugitives, and checked the pursuit of the victors. In an

instant, as in similar circumstances at Marengo, the face of the action was changed: the Vendéans, seized with a sudden panic, fled on all sides, and the exultation of victory was succeeded by the terrors of defeat. In this extremity, Henri de Larochejaquelein, d'Elbée, and Bonchamp collected two hundred of the bravest of their troops, and, by their heroic resistance, not only gave time to the Royalists to escape, but drove back the victorious squadrons of the enemy. Their valour unhappily proved fatal to the two latter, who were mortally wounded in the middle of the charge. Larochejaquelein, with great difficulty, collected five thousand men, with which he carried off his gallant wounded comrades to Beaupreau, where they passed the night; while the remainder of the army fled towards the Loire, and without any orders commenced the passage of the river.¹

CHAP.
XII.
1793.

¹ Jom. iv.
316. La-
rochejaque.
236, 237.
Beauch. ii.
86-91.
Bonch. 49.
Lac. xi. 137.

This defeat proved highly injurious to the Vendean cause, not only by the confusion and depression which it had occasioned among the troops, but by the irreparable loss which they sustained in two of the most distinguished of their generals. The gallant Bonchamp was carried by his weeping soldiers to St Florent, where the Vendéans, worked up to madness by the conflagration of their towns, and the massacre of their families, demanded, with loud cries, the immediate destruction of five thousand prisoners who were confined in the town. The intelligence of the wound of their beloved hero redoubled their fury, and nothing seemed capable of saving the unhappy captives. Already the cannon, loaded with grape-shot, were turned on the helpless crowd of captives, whose destruction to all appearance was inevitable. Meanwhile the officers of his army, on their knees, by his bedside, awaited with trembling anxiety the report of the surgeon—their downcast and weeping countenances soon told that there was no hope—when the cries of the soldiers from without announced the imminent peril of the prisoners. Instantly Bonchamp seized d'Autichamp, who

66.
Glorious
humanity
and death of
Bonchamp.

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XII.

1793.

knelt beside his couch, by the hand, and besought him immediately to fly and convey to the soldiers his last orders to save the captives. The latter quickly ran to fulfil the humane mission, but the soldiers were in such a state of exasperation, that not even the announcement of Bonchamp's entreaties could at first arrest the uplifted arm of destruction. At length, however, they listened to his reiterated supplications; the guns were turned aside, and the prisoners saved. Meanwhile Bonchamp gave with calmness his last orders, and especially commanded that the lives of all the captives should be spared; several times before he expired he anxiously inquired whether this had been done, and expressed the utmost satisfaction when he was informed that they were secure. He was fortunate enough to receive the last consolations of religion from two venerable ecclesiastics, who soothed his dying hours by the promises granted to devotion and humanity. "Yes," said he, "I dare to hope for the Divine mercy. I have not acted from pride, or the desire of a glory which perishes in eternity; I have tried only to overturn the rule of impiety and blood. I have not been able to restore the throne, but I have at least defended the cause of God, my King, and my country; and He has in mercy enabled me to pardon—" Here the voice of the hero failed, and he expired amidst the sobs of all who witnessed the scene.¹

¹ Beauch. ii.
96, 97.
Bonch. 52,
53. Laroch.
241.

67.
Atrocious
cruelty of
the Republi-
cans.

While the last moments of the Royalist chief were ennobled by an act of mercy, the triumph of the Republicans was stained by unrelenting and uncalled-for cruelty. The towns of Beaupreau and Chollet were burned to the ground; the inhabitants of every age and sex put to the sword, and the trophies of victory reared on the blood-soaked ruins of their murdered countrymen's dwellings. "The National Convention," said the representatives Bourbotte and Thurreau, in their report to the Convention, "have decreed that the war in La Vendée should be concluded by the end of October; and we may now say

with truth that La Vendée no longer exists. A profound solitude reigns in the country recently occupied by the rebels : you may travel far in those districts without meeting either a living creature or a dwelling ; for, with the exception of St Florent, and some little towns, where the number of patriots greatly exceeds that of the Royalists, we have left behind us nothing but ashes and piles of dead.”¹

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XII.
1793.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxx. 471.
Guerres des
Vend. ii. 287.
Jom. iv. 318.

Meanwhile, the whole Vendean forces, with the exception of those under Charette, flocked to St Florent, with the design of hastening over the Loire. No words can do justice to the horrors of the scene which presented itself. Eighty thousand persons, of whom little more than one-half were armed, filled the semicircular valley which extends from the base of the heights of St Florent to the margin of the river. Soldiers, women, children, old men, were crowded together, flying in consternation from their burning villages, the smoke of which darkened the air behind them ; while in front extended the broad surface of the Loire, with a few barks only to ferry over the helpless multitude. In the midst of the tumult, and while the air resounded with the cries of the fugitives, every one sought his children, his parents, or his defenders ; and, crowding to the shore, stretched out their arms to the opposite bank, as if, when it was reached, a period would be put to all their sufferings. So terrible was the spectacle, so vehement the agitation of the multitude, that numbers compared it to the awful spectacle which awaits the world at the day of judgment. But the retributive justice of heaven, though slow to punish, did not sleep for ever. On that day nineteen years began the retreat from Moscow ; on that day twenty, was completed the overthrow of Leipsic.²

63.
Dreadful
passage of
the Loire.

18th Oct.

² Laroch.
239, 240.
Beauch. ii.
99, 100.
On 18th Oct.
1812 and
1813.

The generals were at first in despair at the sight of the crowd of fugitives who surrounded the army, and the utter confusion into which all ranks were thrown by the panic—a feeling which was much increased by the death of Bon-

CHAP.
XII.1793.
69.Their great
difficulties
in Brittany,
which they
enter.

champ, who alone was acquainted with the opposite shore, and had always supported the passage of the river. But, finding it in vain to stem the torrent, they made the best dispositions of which the circumstances would admit, to effect the passage of the army; and with such skill were the arrangements made that, although there were only twenty-five frail barks to transport so great a multitude, the whole were ferried over, with all their baggage, without any loss, and before the advanced posts of the Republicans had yet reached St Florent. On the day following, Westermann and the foremost of the Republicans came up to St Florent in time to witness the last detachments of the Vendéans cross to the opposite shore, and vented their disappointment by devastating with fire and sword the unhappy country which they had abandoned. Opinions were divided as to the course which the army should now pursue. M. de Lescure strongly recommended that they should advance, before they were weakened by any further losses, to Nantes, in order both to secure a depot for the army, open a communication with England, and place the unarmed crowd of women and children in a place of safety; and it would have been well for the Royalist cause if this advice had been adopted. But the Prince of Talmont strongly urged a movement towards Rennes, where an insurrection was expected to break out; and his advice was adopted.¹

¹ *Jom.* iv.
319, 320.
Laroche.
239-241,
249.
Beauch. ii.
102-104,
109.

70.
Henri
Laroche-
jaquelein
is made
commander-
in-chief.

No sooner were the Vendéans in Brittany than they made choice of *Henri de Larochejaquelein* to be their commander, in the room of *d'Elbée*, who was utterly disabled by wounds, and on the recommendation of M. de Lescure, who was yet lingering on the bed of death. "Could a miracle restore me to life," said that generous warrior, with a feeble voice, when on his death-bed, "I could form no wish but to be his aide-de-camp." Much had been gained by effecting the passage; but though the troops were still numerous, they were far from being in a condition to undertake active operations. Disheartened

by defeat, exiled from their country, encumbered by a useless multitude of women and children, who followed their steps, the soldiers were very different from the ardent and impetuous bands, who at Saumur and Torfou had carried terror into the Republican ranks. They were no longer in their own parishes; their mode of fighting was ill adapted for an open country, where artillery and cavalry constituted the principal weapons of war; they had no magazines or ammunition, and they had to repair the consequences of a recent and bloody defeat. What then must have been the skill of the generals, what the valour of the soldiers, who could still, even amidst such disastrous circumstances, again chain victory to their standards, and gain such an ascendancy over their enemies, that, but for the invincible repugnance of the troops to leave the vicinity of their homes, they might, by the admission of the Republican generals, have marched to Paris itself!¹

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¹ Jom. iv.
32. Beauch.
ii. 108, 109.

The army advanced successively to Ingrande and Château Gontier, the garrisons of which were easily routed. At Laval, nine thousand national guards disputed the entrance of the town, but Larochejaquelein carried it by assault, and dispersed the enemy. Meanwhile, General Léchelle and the Convention, who flattered themselves that the insurrection was crushed by the victory of Chollet, were beyond measure astonished by the discovery, that the Royalists had crossed the river without loss, and were in a situation menacing alike to Angers and Nantes. After much hesitation it was resolved to divide the Republican army into two columns, the one of which was to cross at Nantes, and the other by the bridge of Cé, and unite for the pursuit of the royal army. Léchelle came up with them while still occupying the town of Laval; and, dividing his army into two columns, commenced an attack. Larochejaquelein flew through the ranks, and addressed these energetic words to his soldiers:—"To efface now the remembrance of your former defeats is the only salvation that remains to you.

71.
Battle of
Château
Gontier.
Oct. 25.

Oct. 23.

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1793.

On your arms now depend not only your own lives, and those of your wives and children, but the throne of France, and the altars of God. Let us then advance to victory ; the Bretons extend their arms to receive you—they will aid us to reconquer our hearths ; but now we must conquer ; a defeat would be irreparable ruin.” Lescure insisted upon being carried in a litter through the ranks, and sharing in the dangers that awaited them. Animated by these examples, the Royalists advanced to the encounter in close column. By a vigorous charge at the head of a small body of horse, Stofflet made himself master of some pieces of cannon, of which his troops were entirely destitute, which he immediately turned against the enemy ; Larochejaquelein and Royrand pressed them severely in front, while another column, headed by Dehargues, turned their flank, and attacked them in rear. The Vendéans had to deal with the redoubtable garrison of Mayence, but they fought with the courage of despair, and on no former occasion had exhibited more enthusiastic valour. After a desperate struggle, the Republicans began to give way ; they were pursued with loud shouts by the Royalists as far as Château Gontier, where a battery of cannon for a moment arrested their progress ; but Larochejaquelein threw himself on the guns, carried them, and pursued the enemy through the town with great slaughter. On reaching the open country on the opposite side, they dispersed, and with great difficulty, and in utter confusion, by diverging lines, reached the towns of Rennes and Nantes.¹

¹ Jom. iv.
322, 326,
330, Laroche-
262-264.
Kleber,
Guerres des
Vend. ii.
305, 306.
Beauch. ii.
120, 123,
130.

72.
Great re-
sults of this
victory.

In this battle the garrison of Mayence, which had inflicted such losses on the Vendéans, was almost entirely destroyed ; the total loss of the Republicans was twelve thousand men, and nineteen pieces of cannon. Of their whole army, scarcely seven thousand could be rallied at Angers after the action. General Léchelle was so overwhelmed by the disaster that he resigned the command in despair, and retired to Tours, where anxiety

and chagrin soon brought him to an untimely end. On the day when this astonishing victory was gained, Barrère announced the extinction of the war of La Vendée in the Convention in the following terms:—

“La Vendée is no more. Montaigu and Chollet are in our power; the brigands are everywhere exterminated; a profound solitude reigns in the Bocage, covered with ashes and watered with tears. The death of Bonchamp alone is equivalent to a victory.” Abandoning themselves to the most tumultuous joy at this intelligence, the people danced in all the public places of Paris, and everywhere the exclamation was heard, — “La Vendée is no more!” It may be conceived, then, what was the public consternation when, a few days after, it was discovered that the Republican army was dispersed, and that the capital itself was open to them.¹

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1793.

¹ Hist. Parl.
xxx. 371.
Beauch. ii.
132-134.

This glorious victory restored at once the Vendean cause. The remains of the Republican army had fled in different directions to Rennes, Angers, and Nantes, and nothing remained to prevent the Royalists from marching either to Paris, Nantes, or Alençon. General Lenoir, in his report to the Convention, declared, “The rebels may now drive us before them to Paris, if they choose.” Unfortunately they were led, by the hopes of succours from England, to direct their march to the coast, and thus they lost the moment of decisive success. After remaining nine days at Laval, to restore some degree of order in the army, they advanced to Fougères, in the hope of being reinforced by recruits from Brittany, and of drawing nearer the expected aid from Great Britain. Here two emigrants arrived with despatches from the British government, which, after assuring the Vendéans of the desire of England to aid them, and recommending Granville as the point of debarkation, promised succour on their arrival at that port. This offer removed every hesitation as to their plans. The prospect of obtaining a

73.
Desperate
state of the
Republicans
after their
defeat.

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XII.

1793.

Nov. 1.
¹Guerres des
Vend. ii.
321, 327.
Jom. iv.
327, 329.
Laroch. 281.
Beauch. ii.
138, 152-
155.

74.
Death of M.
de Lescure.

seaport town, defended by fortifications, where they could at once deposit in safety the crowd of helpless mouths which encumbered the army, obtain a firm footing for their stores, and open a direct communication with the powerful allies who seemed to be advancing to their assistance, dispelled every doubt. They determined, in consequence, to march to Granville, and despatched an answer by the British envoy, in which, after expressing their intentions, and explaining their wants, they entreated that a prince of the blood might be sent to assume the command, and terminate the divisions which already began to paralyse their movements. Meanwhile, the Republicans did everything in their power to repair their disasters; and while Kléber laboured assiduously at Angers to reorganise his army, the Convention issued a bloody decree, in which they ordered that "every city which should receive the rebels, give them succour, or fail to repel them by all the means in its power, should be treated as a city in revolt, razed to the ground, and the whole property of the inhabitants confiscated to the Republic." Fortunately, the weakness of their arms on the right bank of the Loire prevented this atrocious decree from being generally carried into execution.¹

At Fougères the army sustained an irreparable loss by the death of M. de Lescure, who sank at length under the consequences of the wound he had received at the battle of Chollet, and the protracted suffering and anxiety which he had since undergone. He awaited the approach of death with his usual serenity. "Open the windows," said he to his wife, who was watching by his bedside: "is it clear?" "Yes," said she, "the sun is shining."—"I have, then," replied the dying general, "a veil before my eyes. I always thought that my wound was mortal: I have no longer any doubt of it. My dearest! I am about to leave you; that is my sole regret, and that I have not been able to replace the King upon the throne. I leave you in the midst of a civil war, with a helpless infant, and

another in your bosom—that is what distresses me. For myself I have no fears : I have often seen death before me, and it has no terrors : I hope to go to heaven. It is you alone that I regret,” and here his eyes filled with tears ; “ I hoped to have made you happy. Forgive me now, if ever I have caused you distress ; and console yourself with thinking that I shall be in heaven. I carry with me the blessed presentiment that the Almighty will watch over your days.” He soon after breathed his last, while a smile of benevolence still lingered on his features ; and the pious care of his relations committed him to the earth, in an unknown place of sepulture, where his body was preserved from the insults which the fury of the Republicans would have inflicted on his remains.¹

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¹ Laroch.
269-271.
Beauch. ii.
149.

The Vendéans having at length recovered from their fatigues, advanced slowly to Granville, which they surrounded with thirty thousand combatants. Their march had been so much delayed by their encumbrances, that no hope remained of surprising the place, and the want of heavy artillery precluded the possibility of breaching its ramparts. It was therefore resolved to attempt an escalade, for the English succours had not arrived, and the circumstances of the army rendered immediate success indispensable. Soon scaling-ladders were prepared, and the Royalists, after having in vain summoned the place, advanced to the assault. Such was the ardour of the soldiers, that they not only made themselves masters of the suburbs, but rushed into the outworks, and some of the bravest even mounted the rampart, supplying the want of scaling-ladders, which proved too short, by their bayonets, which they stuck into the crevices of the walls. The garrison, panic-struck, were flying from the top, when a deserter exclaimed—“ Treason ! we are betrayed ! ” and the impetuous crowd, yielding to the impulse, precipitated themselves back into the ditch. The attack continued, but not having been preceded by any reconnoissance, and being carried on in utter ignorance of the works, it took place on

75.
The Royal-
ists repulsed
at Granville.
Nov. 14.

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the least accessible front, and where the assailants were exposed to a severe flanking fire from the armed vessels in the harbour. Notwithstanding the most heroic exertions, the Vendéans were repulsed ; and the Republican commander, seeing no other way of driving them out of the suburbs, set fire to them himself, and the conflagration, being aided by a high wind, soon reduced them to ashes. The peasants, at the earnest entreaty of their leaders, returned a second time to the assault over the remains of the suburbs ; but this attack was again unsuccessful. Their priests animated their courage, by marching at their head with the crucifix in their hands ; the officers led on the columns, and over the smoking ruins of the houses the ardent troops rushed forward, regardless of the storm of musketry and grape which showered down upon them from the rampart, and a severe flanking fire from the gun-boats in the harbour. The palisades were broken down, the ditch crossed, and in some places even the rampart was scaled. But the resistance of the Republicans was as brave as the assault ; and after a murderous conflict of six-and-thirty hours, Henri de Larochejaquelein was reluctantly compelled to order a retreat, after sustaining a loss of eighteen hundred men.¹

¹ Laroche.
286-288.
Jom.iv.332.
Beauch. ii.
168-170.

76.
Their re-
treat to-
wards the
Loire.

After this check, Larochejaquelein and Stofflet determined to advance to Caen, where a strong Royalist party was known to exist : and they had already set out at the head of the cavalry for that purpose, when a revolt broke out among the troops. The authority of the chiefs was immediately disregarded ; the Prince of Talmont, accused of a design to escape to Jersey, was seized by the mutineers, and with difficulty rescued from instant death. Larochejaquelein's voice was contemned ; Stofflet alone preserved any authority over the troops. The peasants, who had never been subjected to regular discipline, and could not be made to comprehend the plan of operations which their leaders had adopted, loudly exclaimed against any further con-

tinuance of their wearisome march, and insisted upon immediately returning to their homes. The generals, after exhausting every effort of reason and eloquence, were compelled to yield to the torrent, and orders were given to the whole army to move towards the Loire, to the infinite joy of the soldiers, who declared that they would secure a passage at Angers though its walls were made of iron.¹

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1793.

¹ Jom. iv.
332, 333.
Laroch. 289.
Beauch. ii.
173-175.

The army, on its return homewards, took the road of Pontorson. Rossignol, having collected a body of eighteen thousand men, endeavoured to defend that town, and a furious conflict took place in the streets ; but the attack of the Royalists who felt that they must force their way sword in hand to La Vendée, was irresistible. The Republicans were driven at the point of the bayonet through the streets, their cannoneers cut down at their guns, and the whole army defeated, with the loss of all their baggage and artillery. Rossignol fell back to Dol, where, having received considerable reinforcements, and been joined by another Republican army, which raised his force to thirty-five thousand men, he endeavoured to make head against the enemy, and bar their return to La Vendée. On the approach of the Royalists, however, he evacuated the town ; and its single and spacious street was crowded by carriages, artillery, and baggage-waggons, and above sixty thousand persons who encumbered the army. At midnight, the action commenced by a vigorous attack of the Republicans on the advanced guard of the Royalists drawn up in front of the town ; the alarm was immediately given, and the troops hastily sprang to their arms, amidst the prayers and tears of their wives and children, who saw no possible escape but in their valour. The rattling of the artillery, the cries of the soldiers, the gleaming of the sabres in torchlight as the horsemen shook them in the air when advancing to the charge, the fleeting illumination of the shells which burst on all sides, filled the helpless multitude with terror and agitation.² The first attack of

77.

They defeat
the Republi-
cans at Pon-
torson and
at Dol.
Nov. 19.

² Laroch.
292.
Beauch. ii.
184.

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the Royalists was entirely successful, and the Republicans were driven back two leagues ; but their left wing and reserve, having been suddenly assailed, when disordered by success, by Rossignol's right, was thrown into confusion, and driven back with great loss to the town.

78.
Their desperate situation, and ultimate victory.

The confusion there soon became indescribable : the fugitives broke through the unarmed crowd, while the horsemen trampled under foot men, women, and children in their flight ; and the street was covered with wounded and dying victims, imploring their countrymen not to desert them in their distress. In this extremity the chiefs were in such despair that they sought death ; Henri de Larochejaquelein remained several minutes with his arms folded in front of a battery, while D'Autichamp, Marigny, and the other leaders, exerted themselves to the utmost to stop the fugitives, and Stofflet, who had at first been carried away by the torrent, made the most vigorous efforts to check it. The women even snatched their fusils from the soldiers, and discharged them at the enemy ; and the priests, with the cross in their hands, exhorted them to return to the combat. The curate of Ste Marie de Ré, in particular, from an eminence harangued the men in the most energetic strains. " My children," said he, " I will march at your head with the crucifix in my hands. Let those who will follow me fall on their knees, and I will give them absolution ; if they fall they will be received into paradise, but the cowards who betray God and their families will be massacred by the Blues, and their souls consigned to hell." Above two thousand men fell on their knees, received absolution, and returned to the battle, with the curate at their head, exclaiming, " Vive le Roi ! Nous allons en Paradis." Stimulated in this manner, the soldiers renewed the combat. Ere long such was the fury of the contending parties that they seized each other, and tore their bodies with their hands when their ammunition was exhausted ; so completely were the ranks intermingled, that frequently

the Vendéans and Republicans were served with ammunition from the same tumbrils. At length the valour of the Royalists prevailed; the battalions of volunteers in the Republican army began to fall into confusion, and soon the rout became general; the whole army disbanded and fled, some to Rennes and others to Fougères, leaving six thousand killed and wounded on the field of battle; while the Royalists, headed by their priests, returned to Dol, and hastened to the churches to return thanks to heaven for their unhopèd-for escape from so desperate a situation.¹

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¹ Laroche,
300-305.
Jom. iv.
336, 337.
Beauch.
197, 198.

The Republicans were repulsed, but not defeated. They retired to a position which they had strongly fortified around the town of Antrain, and there still barred the line of the Royalists' march. At noon they were attacked at all points by the Vendéans, headed by Larochejaquelein, who was fearful to allow the first moments of enthusiasm, consequent on their victory, to pass away without achieving decisive success. For long the obstinacy of the Republicans arrested the furious onset of the Vendéans, but at length their intrenchments were carried, and they fled on all sides. The victors entered Antrain pell-mell with the fugitives, and a scene of matchless horror ensued in the crowded streets of that town. In the confusion of the flight, the soldiers, the camp followers, and the wounded, were crowded amidst the artillery and baggage-waggons; the whole fell together into the hands of the Royalists, and there was great danger that an indiscriminate massacre would be perpetrated by the troops, now wrought up by the cruelties of the Republicans to the highest pitch of exasperation. But their leaders interposed, and signalled their triumph by an extraordinary act of humanity. The wounded who had been taken were not only treated and clothed with the same care as their own soldiers, but they were all sent back, without exchange, to Rennes, with a letter to the Republican authorities there, in which,² after

79.
Their glorious victory
and humanity at An-
train.
Nov. 29.

² Beauch. ii.
200-203.

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XII.

1793.

recounting the atrocious cruelty of their troops in La Vendée, they added, "but it is by acts of humanity that the Royal army avenges the massacres of its enemies."

80.

Their great
difficulties
notwith-
standing
these vic-
tories.

These great victories again restored the Royalist affairs; for, during the first confusion following their defeat, the Republicans were in no condition to have prevented them from reaching the bridge of Cé or Saumur, or even making themselves masters of Nantes or Granville, from which the garrisons had now been withdrawn.¹ After long deliberation, the generals determined to march back to the latter place, which would now become an easy prey, and where they might both disencumber themselves of their followers, and open a communication with England. But no sooner was this determination known than the troops again broke out into open revolt; and so vehement was the tumult that it could only be appeased by an immediate change of the destination of the army to Angers. "Consider," said they, "how formidable the Republic is: have we not invariably found that a bloody combat is but the prelude to another still more bloody; are we not weakened by immense losses, and totally inadequate to head an insurrection in Brittany? What can we do, on an inhospitable soil, without succour, without support, often without food? Let us return to the land which gave us birth; we shall find at least some vestiges of our altars, and some remains of our homes, where we may obtain shelter, or in the last extremity be allowed to repose in unmolested graves. Our corpses will not there, as here, become the food of vultures and beasts of prey. What do we expect from the Bretons? Do they not treat us like wandering brigands? Let us, therefore, hasten to regain La Vendée: Charette is still redoubtable amidst its woods; let us unite our standards to his, and he may yet lead us to victory." These discourses inflamed the minds of the people to such a degree, that all efforts to sway them became fruitless. In vain the colours were displayed on

¹ Jom. iv.
338.

the road to Pontorson, and the chiefs made every effort to induce the soldiers to follow them ; a mutiny more terrible than that at Granville arose on all sides, and the leaders were reluctantly obliged to take the road to the Loire. Thither, accordingly, they marched by Fougères, Ernée, and Laval, without being disquieted by the enemy ; but the courage of the soldiers was much abated by the spectacles of horror which met them in revisiting those towns which they had formerly occupied. Everywhere the sick, the wounded, the children who had been left behind, had been massacred by the Republicans, and their bodies still lay unburied in the streets ; even the owners of the houses who had given them shelter had been put to the sword with merciless severity. Every one approached Angers with the conviction that sooner or later, in the progress of this terrible war, he would perish in the field or on the scaffold.¹

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1793.

¹ Laroch.
309. Jom.
iv. 338.
Beauch. ii.
207, 208.

Angers, surrounded by an old wall, and encumbered by vast faubourgs, was defended only by a small garrison ; and, on the approach of the Royalists, General Danican had thrown himself into it with his brigade, less in the hope of making good the place, than of securing for it terms of capitulation. If the troops had known how to conduct a *coup-de-main*, it would have fallen an easy prey, and the whole measures of the Convention would have been defeated. But the attack was not conducted with more skill than that of Granville, and the troops, worn out by fatigue and suffering, did not display their wonted bravery. For long they confined themselves to a distant cannonade ; but at length, after thirty hours of murderous conflict, they had reached the rampart, and were commencing the escalade, when their rear was assailed by the Republican cavalry, who had been detached by Rosignol to harass the besiegers. The attack was quickly repulsed by M. Forestier with the Vendean horse ; nevertheless, such was the confusion produced by this unforeseen alarm, that a sudden panic instantly seized the army ;

81.
They are
repulsed at
Angers.
Nov. 30.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

¹ Laroche-
jaque. 310.
Beauch. ii.
214-216.
Jom. iv.
340.

they left the walls, and began to file off in confusion, without orders, towards Baugé. The chiefs did their utmost to bring them back to the assault, but in vain ; they even went so far as to promise them the pillage of the town if they were successful ; but such was the virtue of these simple people, even amidst all their sufferings, that they rejected the proposal with horror, and declared that God would abandon them if such a project was again entertained.¹

82.

They in vain
attempt to
cross the
Loire.
Dec. 8.

No sooner had the army reached Baugé, than they perceived the ruinous consequences of the step they had taken. There were no means of passing the Loire in that line but by Saumur or Tours, the bridges of which, defended by numerous garrisons, afforded no prospect of effecting the object. A universal consternation seized the troops ; though in sight of their homes, they were utterly unable to cross the river. The sick multiplied with frightful rapidity ; the cries of the wounded, who were abandoned on the march, harrowed every heart ; the severity of the weather, the dreadful roads, the famine which began to prevail, the weeping crowd who surrounded the soldiers, unnerved the strongest hearts. The chiefs knew not what to do ; the men were in despair. In this extremity, the firmness of M. de Larochejaquelein did not desert him, and after carefully weighing every consideration, it was resolved to alter the destination of the army, and move by La Flèche upon Mans. The retreat was protected by a strong rearguard ; but no danger was apprehended in front. Great, then, was the consternation of the troops when, on arriving at la Flèche, they found the bridge broken down, and five thousand men occupying the opposite bank of the river, while their rear was vehemently assailed. But the presence of mind of the general saved them from apparent ruin. Ordering the rearguard to keep firm, he took three hundred of his boldest horsemen, and put a grenadier *en croupe* behind each ; with this he crossed

Dec. 9.

the stream at a ford a short distance farther up at night-fall, and attacked the Republicans in the dark. A panic instantly seized their troops, who dispersed and fled in all directions, while Larochejaquelein re-established the bridge, and gave a day's repose to his wearied army, after which they continued their march without opposition to Mans.¹

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XII.

1793.

¹ Laroche.

313, 317.

Jom. iv.

340, 342.

Beauch. ii.

223-225.

This town was destined to witness the ruin of the Royalist cause. The troops arrived there in such a state of fatigue, depression, and suffering, that it was easy to foresee that they would be unable to withstand a vigorous attack; six months of incessant marches and combats had weakened their resolution, as well as exhausted their strength. They were in the state of the French army on their retreat from Moscow, with this additional circumstance of aggravation, that an exhausted multitude, equal in number to the soldiers, encumbered the army, and melted every heart by the spectacle of their sufferings. The numbers of sick and wounded rendered a halt of a few days absolutely necessary; and this gave time to the Republican generals to concert measures for their destruction. Forces were accumulating on all sides; Marceau, Westermann, and Kléber, had assembled forty thousand men, with whom they assailed the exhausted Royalist army, which was in no condition to resist an attack. They made, nevertheless, a heroic defence, though only twelve thousand could be collected in a condition fit to face the enemy. Larochejaquelein posted the bravest of his troops in a fir wood, from whence they kept up so heavy a fire as long held in check the left of the Republicans; but, Kléber having driven back the division of Stofflet from its position, the whole army was borne backwards like a torrent into the town. There, however, they resisted in the most obstinate manner. Larochejaquelein pointed his cannon down all the streets leading to the great square, and filled the whole houses in the streets with musketeers; a terrible fire arose on all sides,

83.

They are
defeated
with great
loss at Mans.
Dec. 10.

Dec. 12.

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XII.

1793.

¹ *Jom.* iv.
343, 344.
Laroch.
320, 321.
Beauch. ii.
320. *Lac.*
xi. 167.

and increased the horrors of a nocturnal combat. But after a frightful night of carnage, the Republican columns had gained ground in every quarter; Larochejaquelein had two horses killed under him; and, in spite of his utmost efforts, the mighty crowd was forced out of the town, and disbanded when they reached the plain on the other side.¹

84.

Dreadful
rout which
ensued.

The scene of confusion and horror which there ensued defies all description. Larochejaquelein in vain assembled fifteen hundred men to check the advance of the victorious columns; he was wounded and overturned in the tumult, his band dispersed, and the Republicans commenced an indiscriminate massacre of the shrieking fugitives. Ten thousand soldiers, and an equal number of women and children, perished under their relentless swords; while almost all the artillery, and an incalculable quantity of baggage, fell into the hands of the victors. Such as survived owed their escape chiefly to the heroism of the Chevalier Duhoux, and Viscount Scépeaux, who, with eight hundred brave men, maintained their ground to the very last, and with their own hands discharged the guns of a battery which covered the rearguard, after all the cannoneers had fallen by their side. The pitiless Republicans massacred the women and children by thousands; youth, grace, rank, and beauty, were alike disregarded; and the vast crowd which had flocked together to avoid destruction, perished under incessant discharges of grape-shot, or platoons of musketry, before the eyes of the commissioners of the Convention.²

Dec. 16.
² *Jom.* iv.
343, 344.
Laroch.
320-322.
Lac. xi.
167, 168.
Beauch. ii.
230-238.

85.

Their hope-
less state.
Heroic con-
duct of
Henri de
Laroche-
jaquelein.

Such of the Royalists as had escaped the carnage, reassembled at Laval two days afterwards, and it was resolved to move to Ancenis, with the design of again attempting the passage of the Loire. A single boat alone was found in that town; but four large vessels, laden with hay, were on the opposite side, which was guarded by patrols of the enemy. Henri de Larochejaquelein, finding that no one had courage to attempt

their seizure, himself leaped into the boat, while another, which had been brought in a cart, bore M. de Langerie and eighteen soldiers. The river, swollen with winter rains, was flowing in an impetuous torrent, and all eyes were fixed with agonising anxiety on the frail barks on which the safety of the whole depended. At length they reached the opposite shore, and the peasants began with ardour to work at unloading the vessels of their cargoes, when a detachment of Republicans appeared on the coast, where they had landed, and attacked and dispersed the soldiers of Larochejaquelein, who was compelled to seek refuge in a neighbouring forest. At the same time a gun-boat of the enemy appeared in the river, and, by a few discharges, sunk all the rafts, which, with eager haste, the peasants had been forming to transport themselves over, while the advanced guard of Westermann assailed the rear. Thus, at the very moment when his skill was most required, the army found itself deprived of its leader.¹

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¹ Laroch.
332, 333.
Jom. iv.
345, 346.
Beauch. ii.
243-245.

Despair now seized upon the troops, who fled in confusion, without either provisions or leaders, to Nort, and thence, through a heavy fall of snow, to Savenay. The army melted away on all sides; the sick and wounded were abandoned, the most intrepid straggled in detached parties to the banks of the Loire, and above one thousand were ferried over in the night, and formed the nucleus from whence those intrepid bands of Chouans were formed, who so long desolated the Morbihan; while some, with less resolution, surrendered themselves to the Republicans, in hopes of that amnesty which they held out as a treacherous snare to their prostrated enemies. Hardly ten thousand, of whom only six thousand were armed, could be assembled at Savenay, where, nevertheless, they made a gallant defence. Their leaders, M. de Marigny, Fleuriot, the Prince de Talmont, and other indomitable chiefs, urged the men to combat with the courage of despair; all the wounded who could sit on

86.
Final rout
at Savenay.
Dec. 22.

Dec. 23.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

horseback were led out to the fight, and even young women and boys seized the muskets of their fathers and brothers and joined the array. Long, and with heroic resolution, they held the immense columns of the Republicans in check ; and when at length they were obliged to retire, they fell back in good order, with the women in front, and the few pieces of artillery they had left facing about in the rear till the last cartridge and cannon-shot in the army was expended. Even after they could no longer discharge their pieces, the rearguard continued to fight with unshaken bravery with their swords and bayonets, till they all fell under the fire of the Republicans. "I examined their bodies," said the Republican general in his despatch to Merlin de Thionville, "and recognised the stern expression, the invincible resolution of Chollet and Laval. The men who could conquer such enemies, have nothing to fear from other nations. That war, so often styled in ridicule a contest with brigands and peasants, has been the severest trial of the Republic. I now feel that we shall have child's play with our other enemies."¹

¹ Laroch.
345-349.
Jom. iv.
348, 349.
Lac. xi.
168, 169.
Beauch. ii.
250-259.

87.
Total ruin
of the Ven-
deans.

This defeat was a mortal stroke to the Vendean cause ; of eighty thousand souls who had crossed the Loire six weeks before, scarcely three thousand got back in detached bodies to La Vendée. Concealed by the courageous hospitality of the peasants, numbers were saved from the savage cruelty of their pursuers, among whom were Mesdames de Larochejaquelein and Bonchamp, who escaped unparalleled dangers, and lived to fascinate the world by the splendid story of their husbands' virtues and their own misfortunes. Others, less fortunate, fell into the hands of the Republicans, who hunted them down night and day during the dreadful winter of 1794, and led to prison and the scaffold the noblest blood in France.²

² Laroch.
350-361.
Jom. iv.
349.

In war everything depends upon rapidity of execution, and an accurate attention to time ; the moment of success, once allowed to escape, seldom returns. Hardly had the Royalist standard disappeared from the shores of

Brittany, when the tardy English succours, commanded by Lord Moira, who had exerted himself to the utmost to accelerate the preparations, appeared on the coast of Cherbourg, having on board eight English battalions, four thousand Hanoverians, and two thousand emigrants—in all ten thousand men. They looked out in vain for the expected signals, and after remaining on the coast for some days, and receiving intelligence of the defeat of the Royalists at Granville, returned to Guernsey, where the expedition was broken up. Had the succour arrived on the coast a fortnight sooner—had even a few English frigates appeared off Granville during the assault, to intimidate the Republicans, and encourage the Royalists—the town would have been taken, the junction of the English troops with the Royalists effected, and the united forces might have reached the capital.¹

CHAP.
XII.1793.
88.Tardy
movements
of the Eng-
lish to sup-
port the
insurgents.
Dec. 2.¹ Beauch. ii.
178, 181.
Jom. iv.
351.

But slowness in preparation, and utter ignorance of the value of time in war, blasted all the English combinations at this period, and caused them repeatedly to throw away the fairest chances of bringing the contest to a successful issue at its very outset. The rulers of England would do well to reflect on this on the next occasion when they are involved in hostilities. Previous foresight and preparation, vigilance and punctuality in execution, are the soul of war, and generally bring early and decisive success to the party which exerts them. Never was there a fairer opportunity of co-operating with effect with the Continental Royalists than on this occasion. The expedition beyond the Loire, unaided as it was by British succour, was doubtless ruinous to the cause of La Vendée; and yet never did any army so situated achieve such triumphs as it did before its fatal termination. Before it fell, that host, without magazines or provisions, at the distance of forty leagues from its home, and surrounded by three hostile armies, marched one hundred and seventy leagues in sixty days, took twelve cities, gained seven

89.
Ruinous
consequen-
ces of this
delay.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

¹ Beauch. ii.
260.

battles, killed twenty thousand of the Republicans, and captured one hundred pieces of cannon—trophies greater than were gained by the vast allied armies in Flanders during the whole campaign. Can there be a doubt, then, that if ten thousand English soldiers had joined them at Granville, they would have borne down all opposition, and marched in triumph, amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants of the west, to Paris ?¹

90.
Operations
of Charette.

While the great bulk of the Vendean forces was engaged in this perilous and fatal expedition, Charette, with a few thousand men who adhered to his standard, made himself master of the Isle of Noirmoutier, where the Republicans had left but a slender garrison. He immediately began fortifying it with care, with the design of making it a dépôt for his sick, wounded, and stores. From this place of security, he made various expeditions into the adjoining province during the winter of 1793-4, with various success, until the return of the wreck of the Grand Army from its expedition beyond the Loire. Meanwhile the atrocities of his opponents continued. Frequently the Republican general wrote to the mayor of a village, that if the inhabitants would remain they should suffer no violence, and having prevailed on them by this deceitful pledge not to fly, surrounded it with soldiers, and put every living soul to death. General Thurreau was appointed commander-in-chief of the Army of the West, and he found himself nominally at the head of fifty thousand men, but one-half of whom alone were fit for active service, the remainder being sick, wounded, or exhausted in the hospitals. Thurreau commenced his operations by a descent on the Isle of Noirmoutier, of which he easily made himself master, in the absence of Charette. He there found d'Elbée, covered with wounds, who had been removed to that place of security after the battle of Chollet. When the soldiers entered his room, where he was unable to rise from his bed, they exclaimed,—"Here then is d'Elbée at last."—"Yes," he replied,

“ here is your greatest enemy : if I had been able to wield a sword you should never have taken Noirmoutier.” He underwent a long interrogatory, which he answered with equal firmness and good faith ; and met death with unshaken constancy sitting in his chair, from which his wounds disabled him from rising. His last words were raised to save an innocent man, who was led out for execution by his side. The officer who presided at the execution, named, after d’Elbée and two others who were placed together, “ Wieland the traitor, who sold Noirmoutier to the rebels.” D’Elbée, instantly summoning up all his strength, exclaimed,—“ No, gentlemen ! Wieland is not a traitor ! he never aided our party, and you are about to put to death an innocent man !” But scarcely were the generous words uttered, when the order to fire was given, and the whole four fell together. His wife was next day executed with the generous hostess who had given her shelter in her misfortunes ; they both evinced in their last moments the same courage which had been displayed by the murdered general. Numbers of other Royalists were shot at the same time, among whom were the two young sons of Maignan de l’Ecorce, who had followed their father to battle with a courage beyond their years.¹

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

¹ Laroch.
402, 403.
Beauch. ii.
258, 293,
297, 347.
Jom. v.
265.

Henri de Larochejaquelein did not long survive his brave comrade. After his separation from the army at the rout of Mans, he took refuge in the forest of Vésins, near the Loire, from whence he made frequent incursions upon the Republican posts, with such success that his little party daily increased, and proved a source of unceasing disquietude to their generals. In one of his incursions he made prisoner an adjutant-general, bearing an order to proclaim an amnesty to the peasants, and massacre them after they submitted—a discovery which contributed in a powerful manner to perpetuate the war, by taking away all hope from the vanquished. He fell at length, the victim of his humanity : approaching two

91.
Death of
Henri de
Laroche-
jaquelein.

March 4,
1794.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

¹ Beauch. ii.
374, 375.
Laroche. 406.
Lac. xi.
178.

Republican grenadiers upon whom his party was preparing to fall, he ran forward, exclaiming, "Surrender ; I give you quarter." Hardly were the words uttered when the treacherous wretches shot him dead on the spot. He was aged only twenty-one years. When his soldiers had buried him where he fell, they exclaimed—"Now the Convention may indeed say that La Vendée no longer exists !"¹

92.
And the
Prince de
Talmont.
Unheard-of
cruelties of
the Repub-
licans.

The Prince de Talmont about the same time fell a victim to Republican revenge. He was made prisoner near Laval, and after being led about in triumph from city to city, for a considerable time, was executed in the court of his own chateau. When brought before his judges, he said, "Descended from the La Trémouilles, the son of the Lord of Laval, I was in duty bound to serve the King ; and I will show in my last moments that I was worthy to defend the throne. Sixty-eight combats with the Republicans have rendered me familiar with death."—"You are an aristocrat, and I am a patriot," said the judge. "Work out your trade," replied he ; "I have performed my duty." His faithful servant was offered his life, but he refused to survive his master, and followed him to the scaffold. The execution of these gallant chiefs put an end to the first period of the Vendean war. It might then have been terminated, had the Republicans made a humane use of their victory, and sheathed the sword of conquest after it had destroyed its enemies in the field. But the darkest period of the tragedy was approaching, and in the rear of their armies came those fiends in human form, who exceeded even the atrocities of Marat and Robespierre, and have left a darker stain on French history than the massacre of St Bartholomew, or the tyranny of Nero on that of Rome. Their atrocities took all hope from the vanquished ; and in despair and revenge there sprang up a new set of CHOUAN bands, who, under Charette, Stofflet, and Tinteniac, long maintained the Royalist cause in the western provinces,²

² Beauch. ii.
262, 263.
Larochejaq.
398.

and proved more hurtful to the Republicans than all the armies of Germany.

Thurreau was the first who commenced against the Vendéans a systematic war of extermination. He formed twelve corps, aptly denominated *infernal columns*, whose instructions were to traverse the country in all quarters, isolate it from all communication with the rest of the world, carry off or destroy all the grain and cattle, murder all the inhabitants, and burn down all the houses. These orders were too faithfully executed : the infernal columns penetrated the country in every direction ; men and women were burned alive ; infants tossed from bayonet to bayonet. Their path might be traced by the conflagration of villages, their progress known by the corpses of the inhabitants. A contemporary Republican writer has left this character of their exploits :—"It seemed as if the Vendéans were no longer regarded as men ; the pregnant woman, the child in the cradle, even the beasts of the field, the very stones, the houses, the soil itself, appeared to the Republicans enemies worthy of a total extermination."¹ * But from this atrocious warfare arose new difficulties to the invaders. From the consequences of their ravages, provisions failed equally to

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XII.

1793.
93.

Thurreau
and the
infernal
columns.

¹ Beauch.
ii. 369.
Toul. v.
199.

* "Il entre dans mes projets, et ce sont les ordres de la Convention Nationale, d'enlever toutes les subsistances, les denrées, les fourrages—tout, en un mot, de ce maudit pays : de livrer aux flammes tous les bâtimens, d'en exterminer tous les habitans ; car ils voudraient encore affamer les patriotes, après les avoir fait périr par milliers. Je vais à l'instant t'en faire passer l'ordre. Oppose-toi de toutes tes forces à ce que La Vendée prenne ou garde un seul grenier, livre-les aux commissaires du département à Nantes. Je te donne l'ordre le plus précis, le plus impératif : tu m'en garantis dès ce moment l'exécution : en un mot—ne laissez rien dans ce pays de proscription ; que les subsistances, denrées, fourrages—tout, absolument tout, se transporte à Nantes."—CARRIER au GENERAL HAXO, 23 Frimaire ; No. 12, *Bulletin du Tribunal Révolutionnaire*—*Procès de CARRIER*.

Nor was the execution of these orders unworthy of their conception. They are thus described by an eyewitness on the trial of Carrier :—"J'ai vu brûler *rijs des hommes, des femmes, des vieillards infirmes*, dans leurs maisons ; j'ai vu 150 soldats violer des femmes, des filles de 14 à 15 ans, les massacrer ensuite, et jeter de bayonnettes de tendres enfans qui étaient à coté de leurs mères étendues sur le carreau ; c'étaient les héros de 500 livres qui se livraient à ces atrocités, et on n'osait encore rien dire."—*Déposition de THOMAS*—*Procès de CARRIER*. No. 12, *Nouvelle Série*.

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1793.

them as to their enemies; and the Chouan bands were swelled by multitudes who were driven to despair by the conflagration of their dwellings, and the massacre of their relations. Strengthened by such recruits, the unconquerable Charette maintained the contest, and often took a bloody revenge on his enemies. Acquainted with every road and point of ambuscade in the country, capable of enduring the extremities of hunger, serene in danger, cheerful in misfortune, affable with his soldiers, inexhaustible in resources, invincible in resolution, he displayed in that guerilla warfare the talents of a consummate general. In vain Thurreau sent against him General Haxo, one of the ablest of the Republican commanders: his indefatigable opponent retreated before him till he arrived at a favourable place for the attack, and then turning to his men, and ordering them to halt, "We have retired far enough," said he: "now is the time to show the Convention that La Vendée still exists." With that they precipitated themselves with such fury upon their pursuers, that the column was broken, and put to flight, and General Haxo himself slain, while bravely endeavouring to restore the combat.¹

¹ Jom. v.
266, 272,
273. Lac.
xi. 174, 176.
Beauch, ii.
369, 371,
410-418.
Laroch, 414.

94.
Executions
at Nantes.
Legion of
Marat.

While Thurreau was pursuing with varied success the system of extermination in La Vendée, the scaffold was erected at Nantes, and those infernal executions were commenced, which have affixed a stain upon the French Revolution, unequalled since the beginning of the world. A Revolutionary Tribunal was formed there under the direction of Carrier, and it soon outstripped even the rapid progress in atrocity of Danton and Robespierre. "Their principle," says the Republican historian, "was, that it was necessary to destroy *en masse* all the prisoners. At their command was formed a corps called the Legion of Marat, composed of the most determined and bloodthirsty of the Revolutionists, the members of which were entitled, of their own authority, to incarcerate any person whom they chose. The number of their

prisoners was soon between three and four thousand, and they divided among themselves all their property. Whenever a fresh supply of captives was wanted, the alarm was spread of a counter-revolution, the *générale* beat, the cannon planted; and this was immediately followed by innumerable arrests. Nor were they long in disposing of the captives. The miserable wretches were either slain with poniards in the prisons, or carried out in a vessel and drowned by wholesale in the Loire. On one occasion, a hundred 'fanatical priests,' as they were termed, were taken out together, stripped of their clothes, and precipitated into the waves. The same vessel served for many of these *noyades*; and the horror expressed by many of the citizens for that mode of execution, formed the ground for fresh arrests and increased murders. Women big with child, children eight, nine, and ten years of age, were thrown together into the stream, on the banks of which, men, armed with sabres, were placed to cut them down, if the waves should throw them undrowned on the shore. The citizens, with loud shrieks, implored the lives of the little innocents, and numbers offered to adopt them as their own; but, though a few were granted to their urgent entreaty, the greater part were doomed to destruction. Thus were consigned to the grave whole generations at once—the ornament of the present, the hope of the future."¹ * So immense were the numbers of those who were cut off by the guillotine or mowed down by fusil-

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¹ Bull. du
Trib. Rév.
No. 19, p.
74. Procès
de Carrier.
Toul. v. 103,
104. Bonch.
ii. 279-281.
Th. vi. 374.
Prudhom.
vi. 339.

* " Pour en représenter, les tragiques histoires,
Je les peins dans le meurtre à l'envi triomphants,
Rome entière noyée au sang de ses enfants ;
Les uns assassinés dans les places publiques,
Les autres dans le sein de leurs dieux domestiques ;
Le méchant par le prix au crime encouragé,
Le mari par sa femme en son lit égorgé,
Le fils tout dégoûtant du meurtre de son père,
Et sa tête à la main demandant son salaire ;
Sans pouvoir exprimer par tant d'horribles traits,
Qu'un crayon imparfait de leur sanglante paix."

Cinna, Act i. scene 3.

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1793.

lades, that three hundred men were occupied for six weeks, in covering with earth the vast multitude of corpses that filled the trenches which had been cut in the Place of the Department at Nantes to receive the dead bodies. Ten thousand died of disease, pestilence, and horror, in the prisons of that department alone.

95.
Carrier's
Republican
baptisms
and mar-
riages.

On one occasion, by orders of Carrier, twenty-three of the Royalists, on another twenty-four, were guillotined together, without any trial. The executioner remonstrated, but in vain. Among them were many children of seven or eight years of age, and seven women; the executioner died two or three days after with horror at what he himself had done. At another time, one hundred and forty women, incarcerated as suspected, were drowned together, though actively engaged in making bandages and shirts for the Republican soldiers. So great was the multitude of captives who were brought in on all sides, that the executioners, as well as the company of Marat, declared themselves exhausted with fatigue; and a new method of disposing of them was adopted, borrowed from Nero, but an improvement on the plan of that tyrant. A hundred, or a hundred and fifty victims, for the most part women and children, were crowded together in a boat, with a concealed trapdoor in the bottom, which was conducted into the middle of the Loire; at a signal given, the crew leapt into another boat, the bolts were withdrawn, and the shrieking victims sank into the waves, amidst the laughter of the company of Marat, who stood on the banks to cut down any who approached the shore. This was what Carrier called his *Republican Baptisms*. The *Republican Marriages* were, if possible, a still greater refinement in cruelty. Two persons of different sexes, generally an old man and an old woman, or a young man and young woman, bereft of every species of dress, were bound together, and after

being left in torture in that situation for half an hour, thrown into the river.* On one occasion, one of these victims was a woman who had just come out of travail : hardly was she delivered of the infant when she was stripped, bound to a man, and, after an hour's exposure in that way, despatched by strokes of the sabre. It was ascertained, by authentic documents, that six hundred children had, on one occasion alone, perished by the inhuman species of death styled the Republican baptisms. The *noyades* at Nantes alone amounted to twenty-five, on each of which occasions from eighty to a hundred and fifty persons perished ; and such was the quantity of corpses accumulated in the Loire, that the water of that river was infected so as to render a public ordinance necessary, forbidding the use of it by the inhabitants. No less than eighteen thousand perished in these ways, or by the guillotine, in that city alone, during the administration of Carrier;† and the mariners, when they heaved their anchors, frequently brought up boats charged with corpses. Birds of prey flocked to the shores, and fed on human flesh ; while the very fish became so poisonous, as to induce an order of the municipality of Nantes, prohibiting them to be taken by the fishermen.¹

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¹ Bonch. ii.
281, 283.
Th. vi. 373.
Lac. xii.
164, 165.
Toul. v. 104,
105-120.
Prudhomme,
vi. 335,
336, 338.
Bull. du
Trib. Rév.
Procès de
Carrier, 26,
34, 37, 74.

The scenes in the prisons which preceded these horrid executions exceeded all that romance has figured of the

* " Quid memorem infandas cædes ! quid facta tyranni
Effera ! Dii capiti ipsius generique reservent !
Mortua quin etiam jungebat corpora vivis,
Componens manibusque manus atque oribus ora,
Tormenti genus, et sanie taboque fluentes
Complexu in misero, longâ sic morte necabat."

Æneid, viii. 483.

† " Non, mihi si linguæ centum sint, oraque centum,
Ferrea vox, omnes scelerum comprehendere formas,
Omnia pœnarum percurrere nomina possim."

Ibid. vi. 625.

† " 18,000 hommes aient péri par la guillotine, et 10,000 étaient incarcérés dans l'entrepôt ; et c'était Carrier qui commandait toutes ces atrocités. — *Déposition d'ALTAROCHE, Administrateur du Département du Cantal ; Bulletin du Trib. Rév.* No. 19, p. 74.

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XII.1793.
96.Dreadful
scenes in
the prisons.

terrible. Many women died of terror the moment a man entered their cells, conceiving that they were about to be led out to the *noyades*; the floors were covered with the bodies of their infants, numbers of whom were yet quivering in the agonies of death. On one occasion, the inspector entered the prison to seek for a child, where the evening before he had left above three hundred infants; they were all gone in the morning, having been drowned the preceding night. To every representation of the citizens in favour of these innocent victims, Carrier answered, "They are all vipers; let them be stifled." Three hundred young women of Nantes were drowned by him in one night; so far from having had any share in political discussions, they were of the unfortunate class who live by the pleasures of others. Several hundred persons were thrown every night, for some months, into the river: their shrieks at being led out of the entrepôt on board the barks wakened all the inhabitants of the town, and froze every heart with horror. Early in the *noyades*, Lamberty, at a party at Carrier's, pointing to the Loire, said, "It has already passed two thousand eight hundred." "Yes," replied Carrier, "they are in the national bath." Fouché boasted that he had despatched nine thousand in other quarters on the same river. From Saumur to Nantes, a distance of sixty miles, the Loire was for several weeks red with human blood; the ensanguined stream, far at sea, divided the blue waves of the deep.¹* The multitude of corpses it bore to the ocean was so prodigious, that the adjacent coast was strewn with them; and a violent west wind and high tide having brought part of them back to Nantes, followed

¹ Toul. v. 119, 120.
Laroch. 394.
Beauch. ii. 284, 285.
Th. vi. 374.
Prudhomme, Vic. de la Révolution, vi. 337, 339. (Chateaubriand, Etud. Hist. i. Pref. 45.

*———"Sed illos

Magna premit strages; peraguntque cadavera partem
Cedis; viva graves elidunt corpora trunci.
Intrepidus tanti sedit securus ab alto
Spectator sceleris; miseri tot millia vulgi
Non piguit jussisse mori. Congesta recepit
Omnia Tyrrhenus Syllana cadavera gurgis.
In fluvium primi cecidère, in corpora summi
(Præcipites hæsère rates, et strage cruentâ

by a train of sharks and marine animals of prey, attracted by so prodigious an accumulation of human bodies, they were thrown ashore in vast numbers. Fifteen thousand persons perished there under the hands of the executioner, or of diseases in prison, in one month ; the total victims of the Reign of Terror at that place exceeded thirty thousand.

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1793.

The spectacles of horror which ensued when the reflux of the tide and the force of the west wind brought the corpses in numbers back to Nantes, were of the most appalling description. Crowds of the peasants hastened from the adjoining country, in the pious hope of recovering the body of a dear and lost relative from the waves, and giving it a decent sepulture ; but though they in some instances were successful, yet it was only with great difficulty, and often after a severe contest with the monsters of the deep. Enormous eels, twenty or thirty feet long, fierce sharks, and other marine animals of prey, followed the blood-stained waves, and contended with vultures and ospreys, which were watching for their prey on the shore, for the mangled corpses with which they were charged. Indescribable were the scenes of tenderness which these piteous remains brought to light. Children were found with their lips affixed to those of their dead mothers, locked in so close an embrace, that even the struggles of drowning and the long-continued action of the waves had been unable to separate them. Mothers with their infants yet at the breast were found floating together in the deep.¹ Often a voracious fish had eaten out the entrails of the young in-

97.
Scenes of
horror on
recovering
the bodies
from the
Loire.

¹ Prudhomme, Vic-
times de la
Révolution,
vi. 337, 339.

Interruptus aquæ), fluxit prior amnis in æquor ;
Ad molem stetit unda sequens. Jam sanguinis alti
Vis sibi fecit iter ; campumque effusa per omnem,
Præcipitique ruens Tiberina in flumina rivo,
Hærentes adjuvit aquas ; nec jam alveus amnem
Nec retinent ripæ ; redditque cadavera campo ;
Tandem Tyrrhenas vix eluctatus in undas,
Sanguine cœruleum torrenti dividit æquor."

LUCAN, *Pharsalia*. ii. 204 220.

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1793.

fant without being able to tear it from its mother's embraces ; and the dead remains, yet locked in each other's arms, were disputed fiercely by a shark and a vulture, alike striving for the tender spoil.

98.
Courage of
the peasants
in their last
moments.

The peasants, both men and women, of La Vendée, met death in general with the most heroic courage ; they perished boldly avowing their opinions, and exclaiming, "Vive le Roi ! Nous allons en Paradis." Innumerable instances of heroism occurred, especially among the female sufferers. Madame de Jourdain was led out to be drowned, with her three daughters ; a soldier wished to save the youngest, who was very beautiful ; she threw herself into the water to share the fate of her mother, but, falling on a heap of dead, could not sink. "Push me in," she exclaimed : "the water is not deep enough !" and sunk beneath his thrust. Mademoiselle Cuissard, aged sixteen, of still greater beauty, excited the most vehement admiration in a young officer of hussars, who spent three hours at her feet entreating her to allow him to save her ; but as he could not undertake to free an aged parent, the partner of her captivity, she refused life, and threw herself into the Loire along with her mother.¹

¹ Laroch.
392, 393.

99.
Adventures
of Agatha
Laroche-
jaquelein.

Agatha Larochejaquelein escaped in the most extraordinary manner. She had left an asylum, in a cottage at Brittany, in consequence of one of the deceitful amnesties which the Republicans published to lure their victims from their places of concealment, and was seized and brought before Lamberty, one of the ferocious satellites of Carrier. Her beauty excited his admiration. "Are you afraid, brigand ?" said he. "No, general," replied the worthy inheritrix of her name.—"When you feel fear," said he, "send for Lamberty." When brought to the entrepôt, seeing death approaching, she recollected his words, and sent for the general. He took her out alone at night into a little boat on the Loire, with a concealed trap, which Carrier had given him for his private murders, and wished to sacrifice her to his desires : she resisted, upon which he

threatened to drown her ; but she, anticipating him, flew to the side to throw herself into the river. The Republican was softened : “ You are a brave girl,” said he ; “ I will save you.” In effect he left her concealed at the bottom of the boat, among some bushes on the margin of the stream, where she lay for eight days and nights, a witness to the constant nocturnal massacres of her fellow-prisoners. At length she was taken from her place of concealment, and secreted with a man of the name of Sullivan, who resolved to save her, from horror at a murder which he had committed on his own brother, whom he had denounced as a Vendean to the Republican authorities. The intelligence, however, of his humanity got wind, and Lamberty was accused some time afterwards of having saved some women from the *noyades*. To prevent the evidence of this in Agatha’s case, she was seized by a friend of Lamberty of the name of Robin, who carried her into a boat, where he was proceeding to poniard her, in order to extinguish any trace of the former having facilitated her escape, when her beauty again subdued the ruthless murderer. She threw herself at his feet, and prevailed on him to save her life. She was again arrested, however, in the place where he had concealed her, and would certainly have been guillotined, had not the fall of Robespierre suspended the executions, and ultimately restored her to liberty.¹

CHAP.
XII.
1793.

¹ Laroch.
394-396.

The fate of Madame de Bonchamp was not less remarkable. After the rout at Mans, she lived, like all the other wives of the officers and generals, on the charity of the peasants in Brittany, whose courage and devotion no misfortunes could diminish. They at once told their names and connections ; the faithful people received them with tears of joy, and not only concealed them in their dwellings, but stinted themselves in their meals to furnish them with provisions. For several days, when the pursuit was hottest, she was concealed, with her infant child, in the thick foliage of an oak-tree, at the

100.
And Ma-
dame de
Bonchamp.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

foot of which the Republican soldiers were frequently passing : a cough or a cry from the infant would have betrayed them both, but the little creature, though suffering under a painful malady, never uttered a groan ; and both mother and child frequently slept in peace for hours, when the bayonets of their pursuers were visible through the openings of the leaves. At night, when the enemy were asleep, the young children of the cottagers brought them provisions ; and occasionally some old soldiers of her husband's army hazarded their lives to render them assistance. She was at length arrested, and brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal at Nantes ; the recollection of the five thousand captives, whose lives the dying hero had saved, could not save his widow from a unanimous condemnation. The atrocious cruelty of this proceeding, however, excited so much commiseration among the numerous survivors who had been saved by his clemency, that the vehemence of their remonstrances obtained a respite from the judges ; during which the peasants who had protected her little girl sent her to the prison, and the mother had the delight of hearing her child pray every night and morning at her bedside, for her health and deliverance. At length, after a long captivity, she obtained her liberation. Her daughter was intrusted with presenting the petition to the court ; and even the judges of the Revolutionary Tribunal could not withstand the touching appeal made to them by the little child in behalf of its captive parent.¹*

¹ Bonch. 72,
87.

101.
Cruelty of
the small
shopkeepers
in the towns.

"The poor people," says Larochejaquelein, "in Nantes, were exceedingly kind, and did their utmost to save the victims of the Revolution ; all the rich merchants also were humane—for though they had at first supported the

* A singular incident attended the presenting of this petition. The little girl, who was only six years old, went up to the judges, and presented the paper, saying, "Citizens, I am come to ask the pardon of mamma." Casting their eyes on the paper, they beheld the name of Bonchamp, and one of them, addressing her, said he would give her the pardon if she would sing one of her best songs, as he knew she had a voice which charmed all the inmates of the

Revolution, yet they were soon shocked by its crimes, and, in consequence, were persecuted as well as the Royalists; one hundred and nine of them were sent up to Paris for trial, and only saved by the fall of Robespierre. The ferocious class who lent their aid to the massacres and the *noyades* was composed of *the little shopkeepers and more opulent of the artisans*, many of whom came from other towns besides Nantes." Words of vast political importance, as designating the class in which revolutionary fervour is ever most violent, and by which its principal atrocities are committed.¹

CHAP.
XII.
1793.

But if humanity has cause to blush for the atrocious cruelty of the tradesmen in the towns of Brittany, it may dwell with unalloyed delight on the generous hospitality of the peasants in the country. The experience they had acquired in concealing the priests, and the young men required for the conscription, rendered them exceedingly expert at eluding the search of their enemies. Numbers were shot for giving an asylum to the Vendéans; but nothing could check their courageous humanity. Men, women, and children alike displayed unbounded goodness, and inexhaustible resources. A poor girl, deaf and dumb, had been made to comprehend the dangers of the Royalists, and incessantly warned them by signs when their enemies were approaching. Neither menaces of death, nor offers of gold, could shake the fidelity of the youngest children. The dogs even had contracted an aversion to the Republicans, who always used them harshly; they barked invariably at their approach, and were thus the means of saving great numbers. On the

102.
Heroic benevolence of the country peasants.

prison. Upon this she sang with a loud voice the words she had heard from sixty thousand men on the field of battle,—

“Vive, vive le Roi!
A bas la République!”

Had she been a little older, these words would have condemned both herself and her mother; but the simplicity with which they were uttered disarmed their wrath: they smiled, and after some observations on the detestable education which these fanatical Royalists gave to their children, dismissed her with the pardon she desired.¹

¹ Bouch. 87.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

other hand, they never uttered a sound when the Royalist fugitives were to be seen, taught by the peasants, or influenced by their own feelings towards those who they saw were friends, to do nothing that could betray them. There was not a cottage in the whole country where a fugitive might not present himself at any hour with perfect security ; if they could not conceal them, they gave them food and guided them on the road. For none of these perilous services would they accept any reward : they were even seriously offended if any was offered.¹

¹ Laroch.
350, 351.
Beauch. ii.
267, 268.

103.
Reflections
on the ex-
traordinary
successes of
the Ven-
deans.

On reviewing the history of this war, nothing is so remarkable as the prodigious victories gained by the peasants in so sequestered a district, and the near approach they made to the re-establishment of the monarchy, contrasted with the feeble efforts and comparatively bloodless actions of the great military powers which combated on the frontier. Without the aid of fortresses, undisciplined and inexperienced, destitute of cavalry, artillery, and military stores, without either magazines or money, they did more towards the overthrow of the Revolution than all the vast armies which Europe had assembled for its destruction. While the victories of the Allies or the Republicans were never attended with the loss of more than three or four thousand men to their opponents, and seldom led to any other result than the overrunning of a province, or the reduction of a fortress, the triumphs of the Vendéans dissipated whole armies, were signalised often by the loss of ten and fifteen thousand men to the Republicans, made them masters of vast parks of artillery, and, but for the inability of the chiefs to keep the peasants to their colours after any great success, would, by the admission of the Republicans themselves, have re-established the throne. We pass at once in the same year, from the battles of Famars and Kayzerslautern, to triumphs equal to those of Marengo and Hohenlinden.² Such were the astonishing results of the enthusiastic valour which the strong feelings of reli-

² Journ. vi.
400.

gion and loyalty produced in this gallant people ; such the magnitude of the achievements, when, instead of cold calculation, vehement passion and devoted patriotism were brought into action.

CHAP.
XII.
1793.

On the other hand, the ultimate termination of this contest, notwithstanding the heroic efforts of the peasantry, is the strongest proof of the inability of mere valour, unaided by discipline, experience, and military resources, to contend permanently with a regular government. No future insurrection can be expected to display greater bravery, none to be animated with a stronger spirit, none to gain more glorious successes, than that of La Vendée. Yet all was unavailing. This great example should always be kept in mind in calculating on the probable results of popular enthusiasm, when opposed to the systematic efforts of discipline and organisation. It was the want of these, joined to the culpable supineness of the English government, in so long postponing an expedition which might have given them lasting success, which proved fatal to the Vendéans. Had they possessed two or three fortified towns, they might have repaired, under the shelter of these, all their disasters ; had they been masters of a regular army, they might have improved their victories into lasting conquests. The want of these two things rendered their triumphs unproductive of real advantages, and their defeats the forerunner of irreparable ruin. The war, at a subsequent period, in the Tyrol and Spain, demonstrated the same truth ; while the durable successes of the Portuguese and Russian campaigns have showed the vast results which arise from engrafting the vigour of popular enthusiasm on the steady courage of regular forces. The conclusion to be drawn from this is, not that popular feeling can effect no lasting achievement, and that everything in war depends on military organisation, but that it is the combination of the two which is requisite to permanent success. In 1793, the discipline of Austria and Prussia on the Rhine could effect nothing,

104.
And the
cause of
their dis-
asters.

CHAP.
XII.

1793.

105.
Vendean
war finally
commits the
Revolution
against Re-
ligion.

because it was not animated by a vehement spirit ; while the enthusiasm of La Vendée withered, because it was unsupported by regular organisation. In 1812, the Russians combined both to resist the attacks of an enemy tenfold greater, and the campaign of Moscow was the consequence.

But though La Vendée fell, her blood was not shed in vain. The sword of the conqueror subdues the bodies, but it is often the heroism of the vanquished which subjugates the minds of men, and achieves enduring conquests. The throne of Cæsar has passed away, but the blood of the Christian martyrs cemented a fabric of eternal duration ; the tyranny of Mary for a time crushed the religious freedom of England, but Latimer and Ridley lighted a fire which will never be extinguished. From the ashes of La Vendée has sprung the spirit which hurled Napoleon from his throne, and is destined to change the face of the moral world. It first put the cause of revolution openly and irrevocably at war with that of religion ; the friends of real freedom may thank it for permanently enlisting on their side a power which will never be subdued. From the atrocious severities of the infidel Republicans in this devoted province has arisen the profound hatred of all the believers in the Christian faith at their rule, and the stubborn spirit which was everywhere roused to resist it. The desolation of the Bocage was avenged by the carnage of Spain ; the horrors of the Loire have been forgotten in the passage of the Berezina. Periods of suffering are in the end seldom lost, either to the cause of truth or the moral discipline of nations ; it is the sunshine of prosperity which spreads the fatal corruption. Christianity withered under the titled hierarchy, but she shone forth in spotless purity amid the revolutionary agonies of France ; and that celestial origin which had been obscured by the splendour of a prosperous, was revealed in the virtues of a suffering age.

APPENDIX.

CHAPTER VIII.

Note A, p. 317.

TESTAMENT DE LOUIS XVI.

AU nom de la très-sainte trinité—du Père, du Fils, et du Saint-Esprit. Aujourd'hui, vingt-cinquième jour de décembre 1792, moi, Louis XVI. de dom, Roi de France, étant depuis plus de quatre mois enfermé avec ma famille dans la tour du Temple à Paris, par ceux qui étaient mes sujets, et privé de toutes communications quelconques, même depuis le 10 du courant, avec ma famille; de plus impliqué dans un procès dont il est impossible de prévoir l'issue, à cause des passions des hommes, et dont on ne trouve aucun prétexte ni moyen dans aucune loi existante—n'ayant que Dieu pour témoin de mes pensées, et auquel je puisse m'adresser.

Je déclare ici en sa présence mes dernières volontés.—Je laisse mon âme à Dieu, mon créateur : je le prie de la recevoir dans sa miséricorde, de ne pas la juger d'après ses mérites, mais par ceux de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, qui s'est offert en sacrifice à Dieu son Père, pour nous autres hommes, quelqu'endurcis que nous fussions, et moi le premier.

Je meurs dans l'union de notre sainte-mère l'église catholique, apostolique, et Romaine, qui tient ses pouvoirs par une succession non interrompue de Saint-Pierre, auquel Jésus-Christ les avait confiés : je crois fermement, et je confesse tout ce qui est contenue dans le symbole et les commandemens de Dieu et de l'église, les sacremens et les mystères que l'église catholique enseigne et a toujours enseignés; je n'ai jamais prétendu me rendre juge dans les différentes manières d'expliquer les dogmes qui déchirent l'église de Jésus-Christ : mais je m'en suis rapporté, et m'en rapporterai toujours, si Dieu m'accorde la vie, aux décisions que les supérieurs ecclésiastiques unis à la sainte église catholique donnent et donneront conformément à la discipline de l'église, suivie depuis Jésus-Christ.

Je plains de tout mon cœur nos frères qui peuvent être dans l'erreur ; mais je ne prétends pas les juger, et je ne les aime pas moins tous en Jésus-Christ, suivant ce que la charité Chrétienne nous enseigne : et je prie Dieu de me pardonner tous mes péchés ; j'ai cherché à les reconnaître scrupuleusement, à les détester, et à m'humilier

en sa présence. Ne pouvant me servir du ministère d'un prêtre catholique, je prie Dieu de recevoir la confession que je lui en ai faite, et sur tout, le repentir profond que j'ai d'avoir mis mon nom (quoique cela fût contre ma volonté) à des actes qui peuvent être contraires à la discipline et à la croyance de l'église catholique, à laquelle je suis toujours sincèrement uni de cœur. Je prie Dieu de recevoir la ferme résolution où je suis, s'il m'accorde la vie, de me servir aussitôt que je pourrai du ministère d'un prêtre catholique, pour m'accuser de tous mes péchés et recevoir le sacrement de pénitence.

Je prie tous ceux que je pourrais avoir offensés, par inadvertance (car je ne me rappelle pas d'avoir fait sciemment aucune offense à personne), ou ceux à qui j'aurais pu avoir donné de mauvais exemples ou des scandales, de me pardonner le mal qu'ils croyent que je peux leur avoir fait.

Je prie tous ceux qui ont de la charité, d'unir leurs prières aux miennes, pour obtenir le pardon de mes péchés.

Je pardonne de tout mon cœur à ceux qui se sont faits mes ennemis, sans qui je leur en aie donné aucun sujet ; et je prie Dieu de leur pardonner, de même que ceux qui, par un faux zèle mal entendu, m'ont fait beaucoup de mal.

Je recommande à Dieu ma femme et mes enfans, ma sœur, mes tantes, mes frères, et tous ceux qui me sont attachés par les liens du sang, ou par quelqu'autre manière que ce puisse être ; je prie Dieu particulièrement de jeter des yeux de miséricorde sur ma femme, mes enfans, et ma sœur, qui souffrent depuis long-tems avec moi,—de les soutenir par sa grâce, s'ils viennent à me perdre, et tant qu'ils resteront dans ce monde périssable.

Je recommande mes enfans à ma femme ; je n'ai jamais douté de sa tendresse maternelle pour eux ; je lui recommande sur tout d'en faire de bons Chrétiens et d'honnêtes hommes, de ne leur faire regarder les grandeurs de ce monde-ci (s'ils sont condamnés à les éprouver) que comme des biens dangereux et périssables, et de tourner leurs regards vers la seule gloire solide et durable de l'éternité. Je prie ma sœur de vouloir bien continuer sa tendresse à mes enfans, et de leur tenir lieu de mère, s'ils avaient le malheur de perdre la leur.

Je prie ma femme de me pardonner tous les maux qu'elle souffre pour moi, et les chagrins que je pourrais lui avoir donnés dans le cours de notre union, comme elle peut être sûre que je ne garde rien contre elle, si elle croyait avoir quelque chose à se reprocher.

Je recommande bien vivement à mes enfans après ce qu'ils doivent à Dieu, qui doit marcher avant tout, de rester toujours unis entre eux, soumis et obéissans à leur mère, et reconnaissans de tous les soins qu'elle se donne pour eux et en mémoire de moi. Je les prie de regarder ma sœur comme une seconde mère.

Je recommande mon fils, s'il avait le malheur de devenir roi, de songer qu'il se doit tout entier au bonheur de ses concitoyens ; qu'il doit oublier toutes haines et tous ressentimens, et nommément tout ce qui a rapport aux malheurs et aux chagrins que j'éprouve ; qu'il ne peut faire le bonheur des peuples qu'en régnant suivant les loix ; mais, en même temps, qu'un roi ne peut se faire respecter, et faire le bien qui est dans son cœur, qu'autant qu'il a l'autorité nécessaire, et qu'autrement, étant lié dans ses opérations, et n'inspirant point de respect, il est plus nuisible qu'utile.

Je recommande à mon fils d'avoir soin de toutes les personnes qui m'étaient attachées, autant que les circonstances où il se trouvera lui en donneront les facilités : de songer que c'est une dette sacrée que j'ai contractée envers les enfans ou les parens de ceux qui ont péri pour moi, et ensuite de ceux qui sont malheureux pour moi. Je sais qu'il y a plusieurs personnes de celles qui m'étaient attachées, qui ne se sont pas conduites envers moi comme elles le devaient, et qui

ont même montré de l'ingratitude ; mais je leur pardonne (souvent, dans les momens de trouble et d'effervescence, on n'est pas le maître de soi), et je prie mon fils, s'il en trouve l'occasion, de ne songer qu'à leur malheur.

Je voudrais pouvoir témoigner ici ma reconnaissance à ceux qui m'ont montré un véritable attachement et désintéresse : d'un côté, si j'étais sensiblement touché de l'ingratitude et de la déloyauté de ceux à qui je n'avais jamais témoigné que des bontés, à eux, à leurs parens ou amis ; d'un autre, j'ai eu de la consolation à voir l'attachement et l'intérêt gratuit que beaucoup de personnes m'ont montrés. Je les prie de recevoir mes remerciemens.

Dans la situation où sont les choses, je craindrais de les compromettre si je parlais plus explicitement ; mais je recommande spécialement à mon fils de chercher les occasions de pouvoir les reconnaître.

Je croirais calomnier, cependant, les sentimens de la nation, si je ne recommandais ouvertement à mon fils MM. de Chamilly et Hue, que leur véritable attachement pour moi avait portés à s'enfermer avec moi dans ce triste séjour, et qui ont pensé en être les malheureuses victimes. Je lui recommande aussi Cléry, des soins duquel j'ai eu tout lieu de me louer depuis qu'il est avec moi : comme c'est lui qui est resté avec moi jusqu'à la fin, je prie MM. de la commune de lui remettre mes hardes, mes livres, ma montre, ma bourse, et les autres petits effets qui ont été déposés au conseil de la commune.

Je pardonne encore très-volontiers à ceux qui me gardaient, les mauvais traitemens et les gênes dont ils ont cru devoir user envers moi. J'ai trouvé quelques âmes sensibles et compatissantes ; que celles-là jouissent dans leur cœur de la tranquillité que doit leur donner leur façon de penser.

Je prie MM. de Malesherbes, Tronchet, et de Sèze, de recevoir tous mes remerciemens et l'expression de ma sensibilité, pour tous les soins et les peines qu'ils se sont donnés pour moi.

Je finis, en déclarant devant Dieu, et prêt à paraître devant lui, que je ne me reproche aucun des crimes qui sont avancés contre moi.

Fait double à la tour du Temple, le 25 décembre 1792.

LOUIS.

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